Hafa Adai!

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Court stays decision on Mafnas' motion for TRO

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Mafnas

The Superior Court has held off deciding on the request of former Division of Customs and Biosecurity director Jose Mafnas for a temporary restraining order against the Department of Finance and its chief, David Atalig.

Instead of ruling on Mafnas' motion for a TRO that would prevent his reassignment to the Department of Commerce pending judgment, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho decided to set the matter for a status conference

See COURT on Page 4

Gas prices continue to drop

By KIMBERLY_ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The month of July is becoming a treat for many in terms of fuel trends, as it brought a string of gas price rollbacks, which many hope will continue until the end of the year.

Late yesterday afternoon, Mobil Oil Marianas dropped its fuel prices by 15 cents, while Shell Marianas said they will soon follow suit.

See GAS on Page 4

EXCELLENCE AWARD

Team CNMI recently garnered the Excellence Award at the University of Oxford's Systems Mapping Global Competition. They presented a systems map that identified "complex systemic causes" of the prevalence of diet-related diseases in the CNMI. In the photo, from left, is Kaitlyn Neises-Mocanu, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. special assistant for policy and sustainability; Patricia Coleman, interim dean of Northern Marianas College-Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Services; and public health evaluation specialist Chloe Wingerter at the University of Oxford in Oxford, England. Joining them virtually was Reina Camacho, acting manager of administrative services and general support of the Division of Customs and Biosecurity, and Erin Camacho, dietician for the Public School System's Food and Nutrition Program. NMC

MSA launches booking website

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

ON THE NET
iflymarianas.com

After months of development, Marianas Southern Airways officially announced yesterday on its Facebook page that its website, iflymarianas.com, is now up and running and those who want to avail of their low interisland fares may now do so.

Interested individuals can now book an interisland flight starting on Aug. 12 for Saipan to Tinian, Aug. 15 for Saipan to Rota, and Aug. 20 for Saipan to Guam.

Currently, a one-way ticket from Saipan to Tinian can be purchased at $39, while a Saipan to Rota ticket is priced at $69. A ticket from Saipan to Guam would cost you $99.

According to Marianas Southern Airways, they don't anticipate raising their prices any time soon.

in a Facebook post last week, the airline announced

See MSA on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

CCC uncertain whether IPI will even receive promised investment

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Casino Commission, in opposing the lawsuit filed against it by sister companies Best Sunshine International Ltd. and Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC, confirms that IPI has yet to receive its promised investment and is uncertain whether an investment is forthcoming at all.

Over the weekend, CCC filed its opposition to IPI's motion for a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction with the U.S.

See CCC on Page 4

INSIDE

NATION
Firefighters have slowed the spread of a huge wildfire burning in a forest near Yosemite.

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Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. vows to ease poverty and boost economic recovery.

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GOOD HOUSEKEEPING
If you're a homeowner and haven't faced a big repair bill yet, here's how to budget realistically for that.

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SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

Justice Manglona submits letter of intent to seek 3rd retention

Commonwealth Election Commission executive director Kayla S. Igitol receives yesterday from CNMI Supreme Court Associate Justice John A. Manglona his letter of intent to seek retention on the bench in the Nov. 8 general election. Voters overwhelmingly voted for Manglona's retention during the 2007 and 2014 elections.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CNMI Supreme Court Associate Justice John A. Manglona submitted yesterday afternoon his letter of intent to seek his third retention on the bench for the Nov. 8 general election.

Manglona personally handed his letter to Commonwealth Election Commission executive director Kayla I. Igitol at the CEC office in Susupe at 2pm.

In his letter addressed to Igitol and CEC board chair Jesus I. Sablan, Manglona said that, as his current term nears its full course, he continues to hold a deep desire to serve the people of the Commonwealth.

"In the past 22 years as a Supreme Court justice, I have worked diligently to serve the interests of our island community," he said.

In addition to hearing hundreds of cases and authoring opinions both in the Commonwealth Supreme Court and the Supreme Court of Guam, much of Manglona's time and energy, both on and off the bench, have gone toward modernizing CNMI court operations and spearheading community outreach projects.

Manglona said it is his hope that a third retention will allow him to continue this work with CNMI Supreme Court Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro, Associate Justice Perry B. Inos, Superior Court judges, and the rest of the Judiciary's leadership and staff.

"I want to extend my sincere appreciation to all voters whose voices provide the guiding light in our islands. I early await the electoral process and the prospect of further judicial service," he said.

Manglona's eight-year term will expire in May 2014. He ascended to the Superior Court as an associate judge in 1998. In 2000, then-governor Pedro P. Tenorio appointed him to become an associate justice for the Supreme Court.

Manglona first sought his retention election as associate justice at the November 2007 election. Voters overwhelmingly voted for his retention.

At the November 2014 election, voters again overwhelmingly retained him as associate justice.

Manglona and his wife, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona, are the first to obtain an impressive "good" rating among the magistrates whose performances were evaluated by the NMI Bar Association. The couple obtained the "good" rating during a performance evaluation in 2007.

"Good" or a total average of 4 means the magistrate often exceeds minimum standards of performance.

In 2014, Justice Manglona got again a "good" total average rating in the CNMI Bar Association's evaluation of his performance on the bench.

Except for the Manglona couple, all other magistrates who sought for retention got the "acceptable" total average rating.

"Acceptable" or a total average 3 means the magistrate meets minimum standards of performance.

The CNMI Bar Association established in 2002 a mechanism by which nominees for judicial appointment or retention may be evaluated by the association.

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Cruz, Manglona, 3 others file candidacies

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Sen. Francisco Quichocho Cruz (R-Tinian) has filed his candidacy for re-election, while Rep. Donald Manalang Manglona (Ind-Rota) has filed his candidacy for a Rota Senate seat.

Cruz

Cruz submitted his petition for nomination and candidacy documents before Commonwealth Election Commission executive director Kayla S. Igitol at the CEC office in Susupe Friday. If elected this Nov. 8, it will be Cruz's fifth term as a Tinian senator.

Manglona

Manglona, who chairs the House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee, submitted Friday his petition for nomination and candidacy documents before CEC commissioner Lelanie I. Manglona on Rota.

Three others—Edward Junior Castro Maratita, Juan Ulloa Maratita, and Marian Deleon Guerrero Tudela—filed their respective petitions for nomination and candidacy documents Friday and Monday.

Maratita is running for a Rota Senate seat as an independent.

Maratita is seeking election for a House Precinct 5 seat, as an independent.

Former Saipan mayor Marian Tudela is running for a Saipan Municipal Council seat.

Heavy rainfall, gusty conditions, floods possible through today

The CNMI Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency alerted the public yesterday that locally heavy rainfall and gusty conditions are possible through today, Wednesday.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center-State Warning Point, a weather circulation is now located west of the Marianas. Heavy showers and a few thunderstorms extend from near the center to the east of the Marianas within a generally southerly flow.

The agency also issued a flood advisory and warned that urban and small stream flooding caused by excessive rainfall is expected.

"Overnight scatterometry data indicated stronger southeast winds of around 25 miles per hour across the far Northern Mariana Islands. This feature is being monitored by the Joint Typhoon Warning Center for gradual development as it heads northwestward and away from the Marianas the next several days," the weather advisory stated.

"Computer model guidance continues to show the potential for heavy rainfall through Wednesday as a moist and unsettled southerly flow remains in place over the Marianas. The higher potential appears to be from Rota northward where 4 to 6 inches of rain are possible. Additionally, winds are expected to increase to between 15 and 20 mph [Tuesday] night and Wednesday with gusts nearer heavy showers reaching close to 30 mph.

"Seas, currently between 3 and 5 feet, will become choppy at times in response to the increasing winds and could increase to between 6 and 8 feet by Wednesday, especially across the Northern Islands.

The public is being alerted to expect minor flooding in low-lying and poor drainage areas, water over roadways, and overflowing poor drainage areas.

"Satellite imagery shows heavy rain approaching Tinian and Saipan from the south. This will cause urban and small stream flooding. Overflowing poor drainage areas will cause minor flooding," the agency said.

Some locations that will experience flooding include Garapan, Dandan, China Town, Tanapag, As Mahetog, Koblerville, San Jose (Tinian Municipality), Chalan Kanoa I, San Antonio, Chalan Kanoa II, Chalan Kanoa IiII, San Roque, Kagman, Chalan Kanoa IV, Kagman III, Gualo Rai, Afetnas, Chalan Piao, Fananganan, and Chalan Laulau.

Residents of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are encouraged to monitor the situation closely and maintain necessary precautionary measures for possible heavy rain and to also stay informed on the latest statements or advisories, which will be available through local media sources and NOAA weather radio broadcast on 162.5 megahertz, or call CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000 or 664-8000, and for the Northern Islands to contact CNMI EOC State Warning Point at high frequency single side band radio on frequency 5.205.0. ***(PR)***

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DRT revises business license regs; sets new fees

The Division of Revenue and Taxation of the Department of Finance announced yesterday the adoption of amendments on business license regulations and new fees that became effective last July 12, 2022.

In a memo addressed to all CNMI taxpayers dated July 21, it said the public notice of certification and adoption of the proposed amendments to the business license regulations were published in the *Commonwealth Register* on June 28, 2022 (Volume 44, Number 06, Page 048589).

Major amendments include:

■ Changes to annual business license fees

■ Changes to make lines of businesses consistent with the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)

■ Regulations for temporary business licenses

■ Regulations regarding prorated fees

■ Regulations implementing other fees, such as fees for late filing, expedited business license approvals, and amendments to business licenses certificates.

New fees

The new fees that became effective last July 12, 2022, include the following:

(a) Annual Business License Fees. The following annual fees shall be paid for each line of business upon submission of an application for a new business license or renewal application for an existing business license:

(1) Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting, $100.00;

(2) Mining, Quarrying, Oil & Gas Extraction, $100.00; (3) Utilities, $300.00;

(4) Construction, $100.00;

(5) Manufacturing, $100.00;

(6) Wholesale Trade, $100.00;

(7) Retail Trade, $100.00;

(8) Information Industries, $300.00;

(9) Commercial Banking, $500.00;

(10) Offshore Banking, $1000.00;

(11) Other Depository and Non-Depository Credit Intermediation, $300.00; (12) Securities, Commodity Contracts, Other Financial Investments, $300.00;

(13) Insurance Carriers/Companies, $300.00;

(14) Insurance Agencies, Brokerages and Other Insurance Related Activities, $100.00; (15) Funds, Trust and Other Financial Vehicles, $100.00;

(16) Real Estate, $100.00;

(17) Rental & Leasing, $100.00;

(18) Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, $100.00;

(19) Management of Companies and Enterprises, $100.00;

(20) Administrative & Support Services, $100.00;

(21) Waste Management & Remediation Services, $300.00;

(22) Educational Services, $100.00;

(23) Health Care & Social Assistance, $300.00;

(24) Accommodations, $100.00;

(25) Food Services & Drinking Establishments, $100.00;

(26) Other Services (Except Public Administration), $100.00;

(27) Temporary Business License. $20.00

(b) Other Fees. The following are other fees that may be imposed upon a business or applicant:

(1) Late Filing Fee per Business License Certificate, $10.00;

(2) Duplicate License Fee per Business License Certificate, $20.00;

(3) Expedite Fee per Business License Certificate, $20.00;

(4) Amendment Fee for Change of Location per Business License Certificate, $20.00;

(5) Amendment Fee for Change of Business Name/DBA Name per Business License Certificate, $20.00;

(6) Amendment Fee to Add a Business Name/DBA Name per Business License Certificate, $20.00

(c) Temporary Business Licenses. Temporary business licenses shall only be issued for community and public events not lasting more than thirty consecutive days. Temporary business licenses cannot be transferred or renewed. Application requirements provided in § 70-40.1-105 do not apply to temporary business licenses. The application requirements for temporary business licenses shall be set forth in application forms prescribed by the Division of Revenue and Taxation.

(d) Calculating Fees for a Partial Year.

(1) Annual business license fees for obtaining a business license for an additional location or line of business shall be prorated based on calendar year quarters. New business licenses shall expire on the same date as existing business licenses and Applicants are required to pay 25% of the annual fee for the quarter in which the application is submitted, plus 25% for each quarter remaining through the quarter of expiration. Calendar year quarters are as follows:

■ 1st Quarter: Jan. 1 through March 31

■ 2nd Quarter: April 1 through June 30

■ 3rd Quarter: July 1 through Sept. 30

■ 4th Quarter: Oct. 1 through Dec. 31 ***(PR/Saipan Tribune)***

COURT

From Page 1

on Aug. 9, according to his order yesterday.

"Based on the filings, the court stays any decision on whether to grant a TRO/preliminary injunction at this time," the order stated. "The court sets a status conference on Aug. 9, at 2:30pm. All parties are ordered to appear. Plaintiff shall serve the defendants a copy of the motion for temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction and the verified complaint and other pleadings well as a copy of this order on or before Aug. 5. Proof of service shall be filed with the court. The parties shall come prepared to discuss deadlines for opposition and reply and hearing dates."

According to the complaint Charity Hodson filed on behalf of Mafnas, she noted that on the afternoon of July 21, Mafnas was given a memo by Atalig, which purported to "reassign" him to the Department of Commerce as "director of Export, Importation, and Public Outreach" and to report to the Secretary of Commerce. However, after contacting the Office of Personnel Management for information on this position, Mafnas learned that no such position exists, she added.

The Department of Commerce is not a division of the Department of Finance; instead, the Department of Commerce is a separate government agency of the Commonwealth government established within the Executive Branch and headed by a director of Commerce, she said.

Mafnas, through his attorney, argues that the reassignment was illegal and was not motivated by the Department of Commerce's need of his expertise, but instead had everything to do with the political party he aligns himself with.

"It is no secret that Mafnas is a supporter of the independent Palacios-Apatang gubernatorial ticket for the CNMI November 2022 general election, which ticket is running against the incumbent governor. Mafnas' constitutional right to vote freely and as he sees fit has been under fire for months, with a recent written communication/threat coming from the incumbent governor's chief of staff to Mafnas' niece on May 22, 2022, that if Mr. Mafnas is with the governor, in terms of the vision, then 'it is all good' and that the chief of staff, apparently speaking for the governor, sees no ethical conflict in removing a person who is 'unwilling or incapable of executing the executive direction,'" Hodson said.

In addition, Mafnas' lawyer also alleged that Torres verbally instructed her client on at least three different occasions,to purchase a multi-million-dollar x-ray machine for Customs, but to "run it through [the governor's] brother."

"However, this was another executive directive that Mafnas refused to participate in and, instead, Mafnas relayed his concerns to his then-supervisor, the secretary of Finance, and the machine was not pursued under those terms. Mafnas expects that this continued muzzling of his First Amendment rights and the retaliation against Mafnas' assertions of his freedom to vote as he chooses and not as he is told will continue into his 'reassigned position' at the Department of Commerce," Hodson said.

Mafnas started as a trainee with the Division of Customs in 1984 and has worked his way up within the agency. From 1998 to 2003, Mafnas served as the director of Customs, then from 2003 to 2013, he served as the director of Administration under the Department of Finance. Mafnas later returned to Customs and served as the director of Customs and Biosecurity from 2013 to July 21, 2022, when he was abruptly reassigned.

MSA

From Page 1

that they tentatively expect to launch their inaugural flight in August. Yesterday, the airline confirmed that its inaugural flight will be on Aug. 12.

The announcement came after Marianas Southern Airways announced in a post on their social media page that their first two Tecnam aircrafts are now on the way to the CNMI.

Although their aircraft have yet to arrive, Marianas Southern Airways announced over the weekend that their spare plane has successfully landed on Saipan.

According to a previous *Saipan Tribune* article, Marianas Southern Airways plans to offer over 90 weekly flights serving Saipan, Tinian, Rota, and Guam at launch. Through Southern Airways' interline agreement with United Airlines, it will also provide passengers the ability to make a reservation from Tinian, Rota, or Saipan to anywhere in the United network.

Marianas Southern Airways is a joint venture between Saipan's MP Enterprises and Southern Airways Express, one of America's largest regional airlines.

It will operate the all-new Tecnam P2012 Traveler aircraft, known as the world's most advanced twin-engine turbocharged piston aircraft. The nine-seat aircraft features generous luggage allowances to complement its sleek and modern interior design, which includes LED reading lights, overhead air conditioning controls, and ergonomic seats with a USB port, armrest, and cup holder for each passenger.

The lone interisland airline in the CNMI right now is Star Marianas Airlines.

CCC

From Page 1

District Court for the NMI after the parties in this case failed to execute a settlement agreement by July 18.

It its 24-page opposition, the two lawyers for the CCC, assistant attorneys general Keisha Blaise and Alison Nelson, told the court that nearly two months has passed since IPI filed its motion for a TRO and preliminary injunction to stay the revocation of their exclusive casino license, promising that a $150-million investment was forthcoming to satisfy its debts. However, to date, there is no evidence that this is true, CCC says.

"Plaintiffs allege that a total of $150 million will be infused into IPI 'in the coming weeks for the purposes of satisfying its creditors, including the CCC, and completing the casino project.' However, nearly two months has passed since plaintiffs filed their motion [and] there is no evidence that the purported investment expected by plaintiffs has been made, and it is uncertain when it will be made—or whether it will be made at all," the lawyers stated.

In addition, the CCC informed the District Court for the NMI that plaintiffs have not provided sufficient evidence to establish how even an additional $150 million will save IPI from revocation.

"Enforcement Actions 20-001 (consolidated) and 20-003 (consolidated) determined that IPI failed to pay $18.65 million for the Casino Regulatory Fee and Annual License Fee due for 2020 and assessed penalties in the amount of $6.6 million. Moreover, the current enforcement actions seek a determination that IPI failed to pay another $18.65 million for the Casino Regulatory Fee and Annual License Fee due for 2021 and will seek additional penalties.

Similar amounts for 2022 are due in the coming months," they said.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

GAS

From Page 1

As of yesterday, Mobil's Extra fuel now costs $5.71 per gallon from $5.86. Supreme fuel was also reduced from $6.31 per gallon to $6.16 while diesel also went down from $6.98 per gallon to $6.68.

As of yesterday, fuel prices on Saipan have dropped a total of 85 cents since the start of July. Compared to the first week of July, when regular fuel was at $6.56 per gallon, the same amount of fuel now costs $5.71 after a series of price rollbacks.

The first rollback was seen on July 4, with local oil companies reducing prices by 15 cents from $6.56 to $6.41. Then, just 24 hours later, in the early hours of July 7, the CNMI saw the largest rollback by far when oil companies dropped their prices by 25 cents from $6.41 to $6.16. The third rollback of July was seen last July 14, with fuel prices dropping to $6.01. The fourth rollback was seen last Wednesday with fuel dropping another 15 cents from $6.01 to $5.86.

A local motorist said he hopes the trend will continue to the end of the year.

"All we can hope for now is for this to continue. I hope by the end of the year we see gas drop to $5 at least. That would be a huge relief for many, like myself," he said.

A woman who was pumping her gas at Mobil yesterday said that, with the almost $1 reduction in fuel prices in the last month, she hopes the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would "get with the program" and reduce its Fuel Adjustment Charge.

"CUC is so fast to raise its prices when gas goes up even 10 cents but when it reduces continuously, they take their time in reducing their FAC? They should get with the program and reduce their charges too because the people are suffering with these ridiculous fuel charges. On my bill, for example, I'm charged almost $200 for electricity, and that fine, but the FAC is about $500. That is ridiculous," she said.

CUC has yet to announce whether it will be making adjustments to its FAC rate, now that fuel prices have gone down significantly in the past few weeks.

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REQUEST FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
CUC-RAESP-22-030

Underground Power Distribution Systems to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation – Phase I

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed Architectural & Engineering (A&E) Services Proposal from qualified firms to design an underground power distribution system from the CUC Power Plant 1 Facility to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC). When fully functioning, the infrastructure is designed to distribute uninterrupted power to the CHCC during tropical storms or typhoon events and following natural disasters such that the CNMI's only public owned healthcare facility is able to provide healthcare services to the CNMI's people. The RAESP project is the first step of a phase approach process in determining the cost benefits of constructing a dedicated underground power distribution system. The design of the infrastructure will convey the feasibility of this FEMA investment in delivering uninterrupted power to the CHCC during tropical storms or typhoon events and following natural disasters.

This project is funded by a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The RAESP package may be obtained via email between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $300.00 for one RFP package set. **To register for the RAESP, please contact Christie Sablan, CUC Purchasing Technician Senior via email address christie.sablan@cucgov.org.**

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Proposal; and One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Cost Proposal must be submitted in a separately sealed envelope marked *"CUC-RAESP-22-030, Underground Power Distribution Systems to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation"* to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on August 26, 2022**. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

All Offerors are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Offeror due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of, and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. Proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment. There shall be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing proposers.

All responses to this RAESP should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the proposer awarded a contract.

This RAESP does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals in anticipation of a contract. This request and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations. The contractor shall be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 a.m. (ChST) on August 12, 2022** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC's Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Anne Crocket, CUC Power Division Chief Engineer via email address anne.crocket@cucgov.org and Christie Sablan, Purchasing Technician, Senior via email address christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-22-035

FINANCIAL AND COMPLIANCE AUDIT FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2022, 2023 & 2024

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) requires the services of a U.S. Certified Public Accounting Firm/Individual with knowledge, skill, and experience in auditing (1) financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and auditing standards of the U.S. and; (2) federal awards programs in accordance with the Single Audit Act and U.S. Office of Management and Budget requisites.

- Provide assistance to the CUC management with the preparation of the annual financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America
- Ensure that the financial statements and auditor's reports also meet any specific requirements contained in agreements or other contractual requirements relative to financial statement presentation and the audits.
- Submit the draft financial statements and accompanying auditor's reports to CUC management no later than January 31st of each year, and issue the final reports no later than February 28th of each year.
- Provide 15 bound copies of the final financial statements and accompanying auditor's report
- Provide an electronic copy (e.g., .pdf format) of the final report to the CUC.

Auditors are responsible to review the 2022, 2023 & 2024 financial statements to include the physical CUC assets for each fiscal year.

The RFP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one RFP package set.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies, along with an electronic copy of the proposal on a compact disk in PDF format must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked ***"CUC-RFP-22-035, Financial and Compliance Audit for Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2022, 2023 & 2024"*** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **August 3, 2022 at 10:00 AM (ChST)**. Submissions, in PDF, must also be emailed to the addresses as noted in the RFP. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. Offerors shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity to discussion and revision of proposals, and such revision may be permitted after submission and prior to award for the purpose of obtaining the best and final offers. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing offerors.

All Offeror are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Offeror due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Offeror are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on July 20, 2022** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Greg Cruz, CUC Chief Financial Officer, via email address greg.cruz@cucgov.org and Christie Sablan, CUC Senior Purchasing Technician via email address christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

CHRETIEN T. VOERG
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

MCS graduates gain admission to UA, UC-Berkeley, and UOG

Bucalig

Namkung

Choi

Digno

Alvarez

Villagomez

Recent Mount Carmel School graduates Robin Kyle Manansala Alvarez, Fiona Marielle Avengaña Bucalig, Richard Jesus Mafnas Villagomez, Jaeuk Choi, Lyndon Moleño Digno, and Hyun Namkung have gained admission to each of their respective colleges for their undergraduate education.

Attending the University of Arizona are Mount Carmel School 2022 graduates Alvarez and Bucalig.

Majoring in astronomy, Alvarez said he chose the University of Arizona, "because of their reputation in majors such as astronomy, cybersecurity, and its countless opportunities for students to connect and collaborate. The financial aid I've been offered and extensive research done with my parents helped me commit to this university."

Bucalig said she aims to pursue biomedical engineering at the University of Arizona which has remained one of her top college choices throughout high school. "Ever since I was younger, I've always wanted to go to college in Arizona. I chose the University of Arizona because I wanted to go somewhere that would challenge me academically and force me to grow as a person. Overall, I think that I will thrive and successfully pursue my degree at the University of Arizona."

Reaching one of his personal goals, Villagomez, who is Mount Carmel School's recent salutatorian, is set to attend the University of California, Berkeley. Pursuing computer science as his major, Villagomez said, "I chose UC Berkeley because it's my dream school; it's a renowned school in computer science with a strong reputation for impact. At UC Berkeley, I'll have countless opportunities to explore my interests and challenge myself in order to grow. I'm beyond grateful for this amazing opportunity and will do my best to make the most out of it."

Attending the University of Guam are Choi, who will major in pre-nursing; Digno, who will major in civil engineering; and Namkung, who will major in marketing and communications.

Capturing the excitement shared among his peers Digno said, "I committed to the University of Guam in hopes of pursuing a career in civil engineering. I chose this university because I wanted to find a school that was close to home. I instantly fell in love with the news that they would be able to teach one of the many things that interest me—engineering. To have such an opportunity to take a course with big interest and to have family, friends, and loved ones at a close distance from home is a big but honest choice. I have hope for UOG because it will make me grow more as a person and find out the many opportunities I can't wait to experience. A new chapter of me is emerging soon, and I can't wait!"

Despite the community impact of Super Typhoon Soundelor, Super Typhoon Yutu, and the COVID-19 pandemic, Mount Carmel School continues to strengthen its college preparatory program in order to support its graduate's academic and professional endeavors. In addition to rigorous academic programs, Mount Carmel School prioritizes its student's access to varying extra-curricular activities, apostolic programs, and community service opportunities.

While slots are limited for specific grade levels, Mount Carmel School is still accepting applications for the 2022-2023 school year. For more information about Mount Carmel School and its college preparatory programs, visit www.mountcarmelsaipan.com. ***(PR)***

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW22-ITB No.: 42200129

SUBMISSION DATE: August 17, 2022 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Tangan Tangan Drive Road Improvement Phase 2, Saipan"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The project package will be available on or after **July 20, 2022** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan.

A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars ($100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at DPW Technical Services Division required for each set.

There will be a Pre-bid Conference for this project on **August 05, 2022,** 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **August 11, 2022** to Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
Secretary, DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
Acting Director,
Division of Procurement Services

US sends Sherman, Kennedy to visit the Solomon Islands

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — The U.S. is sending a high-profile diplomatic delegation to visit the Solomon Islands next week led by Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman and including Ambassador to Australia Caroline Kennedy.

The U.S. State Department said Tuesday the trip is to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Guadalcanal and for the diplomats to meet with Solomon Islands officials to "highlight the enduring relationship" between the two nations.

The visit will hold particular personal interest for Sherman and Kennedy, whose fathers both fought there during World War II.

Sherman

And it comes after the U.S. and several Pacific nations expressed deep concern about a security pact the Solomon Islands signed with China in April, which many fear could result in a military buildup in the region.

The trip will also highlight the reopening of the U.S. embassy in the capital, Honiara, which is part of an express U.S. strategy to counter China's growing influence.

The U.S. previously operated an embassy in the Solomon Islands for five years before closing it in 1993.

Kennedy has just begun her role in Australia after formally presenting her credentials on Monday. When she arrived in Australia last week, she told reporters the Pacific region was critical and "I think the U.S. needs to do more."

"We're putting our embassies back in and the Peace Corps is coming, and USAID is coming back and we're coming back," she said.

Kennedy said the Pacific held great personal significance because her father, the late President John F. Kennedy, had served there during World War II and "was rescued by two Solomon Islanders and an Australian coast watcher."

Sherman's father Mal Sherman was a Marine who was wounded during the Battle of Guadalcanal.

As well as Sherman and Kennedy, the delegation will include Kin Moy, a state department principal deputy assistant secretary, and Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Stephen Sklenka, the deputy commander of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.

During the Aug. 6-8 trip, Sherman is scheduled to give speeches at Skyline Ridge, the site of the U.S. Guadalcanal Memorial, and at Bloody Ridge.

EPA head to visit Puerto Rico on environmental justice tour

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)—Norma Quiñones spent four years without running water after Hurricane Maria destroyed the well that she and dozens of neighbors depend on in their community deep in the mountains of western Puerto Rico.

Regan

Last Christmas, crews installed a new well, but the water is not treated, so Quiñones is forced to drive 45 minutes into town to buy nearly 100 bottles of water every week for her family.

"It's been years of suffering," she said.

A school nurse, the mother of two hopes their situation and others like it across the U.S. territory will change with the official visit this week of Michael Regan, administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

He is expected to tour several poor communities on the island as part of a U.S. initiative dubbed "Journey to Justice" to learn how pollution has affected them.

"It's really important for me that we're on the ground and we're seeing these injustices up close," Regan told The Associated Press in an interview Monday. "These are the same communities that are on the front line, facing the impact of climate change."

Regan's first stop will be Tuesday at the Cano Martín Peña, considered one of Puerto Rico's most polluted waterways. It is part of the San Juan Bay Estuary and is home to more than 25,000 people descended from impoverished migrants who arrived in the mid-1900s from the island's rural areas.

Community leader Lucy Cruz told AP that while federal and local officials have made funds available to clean the waterway and reduce flooding, problems include the lack of a sewage system.

"This would not only be a change for the Cano Martín Peña community, but for all of Puerto Rico," she said.

On Wednesday, Regan is expected to visit at least two community drinking water systems in the northern city of Caguas and talk with residents about the challenges they face.

He also is scheduled to stop at a facility in southern Puerto Rico that burns coal to produce energy and has long been the source of complaints and health concerns for those living nearby.

"I'm headed to Puerto Rico not only to spotlight these injustices, but to listen and learn from the community so we can develop solutions together," he said.

The visit comes as Puerto Rico is slated to receive $78 million in EPA funds for water infrastructure projects. The local government will decide how the funds will be allocated, although Regan already has sent a letter that outlines the criteria for those resources and the agency's expectations.

He also noted that much of the funding is available as grants or forgivable loans.

"This means that communities that have never had a seat at the table can be eligible for those resources," he said, adding that Puerto Rico has long suffered from air and water pollution. "For far too long, too many communities have gone neglected and that must stop now."

Quiñones, who lives more than two hours from the capital of San Juan, had hoped that Regan would stop by her community. Undeterred, she said she wrote him a letter detailing the woes of the damaged well.

"Water is the most essential thing in life after air," she said.

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NMHC JVA NO.	Positions:	Salary:	Opening Date	Closing Date
2022-018	CDBG-DR Internal Auditor (1-Position) RE-ANNOUNCEMENT	UNGRADED $50,000.00 to $65,000.00 per annum	June 6, 2022	Until Filled
2022-019	CDBG-DR Project Supervisor (1-Position) RE-ANNOUNCEMENT	UNGRADED $35,000.00 to $45,000.00 per annum	June 6, 2022	Until Filled

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information can be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net and www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; the CDBG-DR Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Ladera Building, Chalan Laulau, Beach Road; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre- employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447 or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

LIU, YANQUIONG
PMB 698 BOX 10003
Saipan MP 69650
(670)989-9165
Pro se

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

LUO, BAOHAN BY LIU, YANQUIONG : CIVIL ACTION NO. 22-0151 : **NOTICE OF HEARING**

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for hearing on the 18th day of August 2022, at 10:00 a.m. before Judge Joseph N. Camacho.

Dated this 18th day of July, 2022.

Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court
By: Deputy Clerk of Court

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- Have reliable transportation

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Northern Marianas Humanities Council
Navigating the Human Experience

Board Vacancy Announcement

CNMI residents are invited to express their interest in serving as a Board member for the Northern Marianas Humanities Council (Council). The Council is a non-profit, private corporation affiliated with the National Endowment for the Humanities whose mission is to navigate and explore the human experiences of the indigenous and diverse peoples of the Commonwealth by enriching their lives through research, dialogue, programs, and publications.

The Council's Board is comprised of thirteen volunteer members who serve three-year terms. The Council strives to maintain a board that reflects a broad cross section of our CNMI community and consider the following factors: humanities expertise, fiscal and fundraising expertise, geographical coverage, demographic diversity, and attendance at a post-secondary institution. The ideal candidate will have a strong desire to promote the Council's mission, programs, and activities and to actively participate in fundraising activities. Board responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Attending regular Council meetings four times annually;
- Raising funds for Council programs;
- Recruiting community partners;
- Promoting awareness about the Council's mission and its programs in the community;
- Attending Council programs and activities;
- Participating in working committee meetings;
- Evaluating Council programs and activities;
- Reviewing grant applications;
- Providing input about the humanities from various community members, and
- Attending conferences, workshops and other meetings on behalf of the Council.

Applicants are invited to submit their letters of interest and resumes to **Dr. Bobby J.A. Cruz, Chair**, Northern Marianas Humanities Council at Post Office Box 506437 Saipan, MP 96950, delivered to the Council's office located in the Springs Plaza Building in Gualo Rai, Saipan, or via email to: info@nmhcouncil.org. For additional information, please contact the Council's Executive Director, Leo Pangelinan, at telephone 235-4785 or visit the Council's website at www.nmhcouncil.org.

Opinion

Hafa Adai
Saipan Tribune
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The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Fist pumper to fleeing coward: Jan. 6 video shows Missouri who Josh Hawley really is

Josh Hawley is a laughingstock.

During Thursday night's televised hearings of the House committee investigating the Jan. 6, 2021, coup attempt at the U.S. Capitol, Rep. Elaine Luria played video of Missouri's junior senator that will surely follow him the rest of his life.

In the clip, Hawley sprints across a hallway as he and his fellow senators are evacuated after insurrectionists had breached the Capitol building. When it went across the screen, the audience in the room with the committee erupted in laughter.

Of course, Twitter immediately dogpiled. Hawley's name was the No. 1 trending topic in politics that evening as users shared the hashtag #HawlinAss along with GIFs of a galloping Forrest Gump.

"From now on, if political reporters ask Josh Hawley if he's planning to run, he's going to have to ask them to clarify," quipped one.

A signature Hawley issue is masculinity—as in, how little of it American men seem to have these days. It's a frequent topic in his speeches and on his podcast, where "the left-wing attack on manhood" is a dire threat to our society. Regnery Publishing is set to release his book "Manhood: The Masculine Virtues America Needs" next year. Twitter didn't see much bravado as he ran from the mob on Luria's video.

But funny as the visual was, there is absolutely nothing amusing about Jan. 6, 2021. A bipartisan Senate report concluded seven people died as a result of the attack. Two more Metropolitan Police officers committed suicide shortly after. About 150 members of law enforcement were injured, and it's impossible to know how many others caught up in the horrific event will carry scars for life, of body and mind.

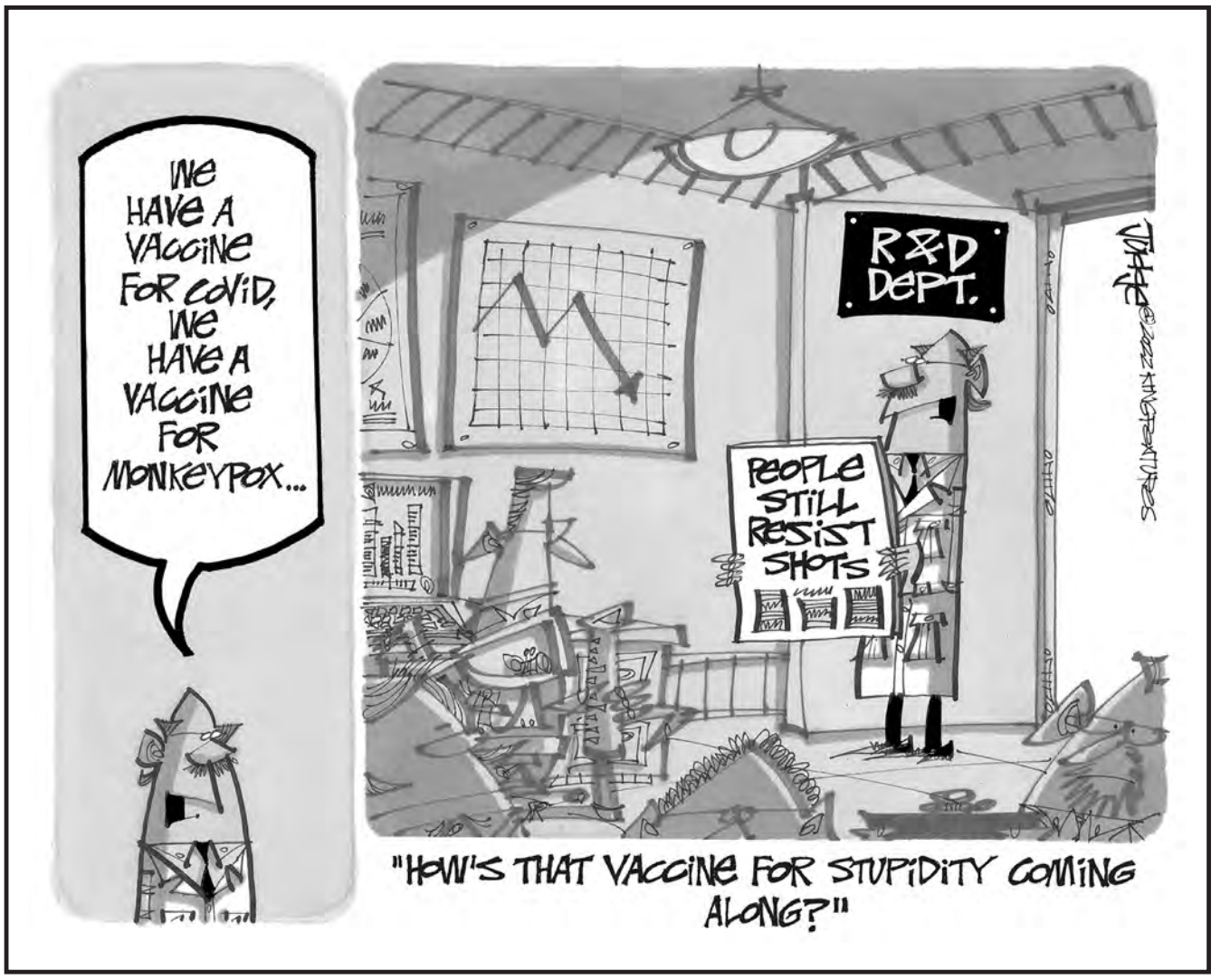
We said that day that Hawley has blood on his hands for his role in perpetuating the lies that drove thousands of people to violence. That remains true.

Beyond the physical toll, though, is the damage Jan. 6 continues to inflict on our democracy and our shared sense of truth. The House committee is systematically demonstrating how too many Republicans in Donald Trump's orbit allowed him to incite the riot, which he had promised in advance "will be wild," and were then unable to get him to call his fans off until unimaginable damage had already been done.

Hawley has become one of the defining figures of that day. A famous photo captured by Francis Chung shows him raising a fist in solidarity with the crowds that would soon be breaking out windows and assaulting law enforcement. Luria said a Capitol Police officer who was there told the committee that Hawley's gesture "riled up the crowd and it bothered her greatly because he was doing it in a safe space protected by the officers and the barriers."

And later that day, when the Senate reconvened after the halls of the Capitol had been cleared and secured, Hawley

See HAWLEY on Next Page


WE HAVE A VACCINE FOR COVID, WE HAVE A VACCINE FOR MONKEYPOX...
R&D DEPT.
PEOPLE STILL RESIST SHOTS
"HOW'S THAT VACCINE FOR STUPIDITY COMING ALONG?"

The evidence leads to Donald Trump

By ADAM B. SCHIFF
Los Angeles Times

Adam B. Schiff, a Democrat, represents California's 28th Congressional District and is chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. He is a member of the Jan. 6 House select committee.

On the afternoon of Jan. 6, 2021, I was on the House floor as a mob descended on the Capitol. Deceived by the former president into believing the election had been stolen from them, these insurrectionists were armed, angry and pointed in our direction. They beat Capitol and Metropolitan police officers—sprayed them with chemicals, broke their bones and gouged them with flagpoles. They even desecrated the American flags that hung on these now-weapons.

The insurrectionists made it into the building that day, but they did not accomplish the former president's objective. Thanks to the valiant efforts of the police, we finished our job. The electoral votes certifying the 2020 presidential election were counted. Joe Biden became the president of the United States, as voters intended.

As I left the Capitol that night, I was convinced that the Republican Party could see the terrible end to which Donald Trump and his "Big Lie" had brought us—to the point of a violent attack on our own government. Surely now, he and everything he stood for would be repudiated. I was wrong.

More than a year and a half from the events of that day, we all must confront the terrible reality that our democracy is more fragile than it was on Jan. 6.

The Big Lie lives on. And it has metastasized—ushering in a new generation of discriminatory laws around the country to disenfranchise Americans, often voters of color—and been used as a cudgel to attack independent elections officials and drive them from their posts. The lesson Donald Trump and his enablers learned from the failed insurrection seems to be this:

Perhaps the best way to overturn an election and our democracy is not with a violent attack. Perhaps it is much simpler. If a state elections official will not find 11,780 votes that do not exist—as Trump asked Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to do—they must have loyalists in those positions during the next election who will.

The Jan. 6 House select committee has worked and is working to puncture the Big Lie and to reveal to the American people the multiple lines of effort to overturn the election.

Ultimately, Jan. 6 was not a date in isolation but the violent culmination of several failed attempts to thwart the peaceful transfer of power. These included a pressure campaign directed against state and local elections officials and legislators, a scheme to create fake electors, bogus litigation around the country, an attempt to decapitate the leadership of the Justice Department and use the department to promulgate false claims of fraud, and an effort to coerce Vice President Mike Pence into ignoring his constitutional duty and the law.

It was only when all of these other efforts failed that the former president summoned the mob, incited it and, knowing that it was armed and dangerous, directed its fury at the Capitol in a desperate attempt to delay or stop the proceedings.

The committee has attempted to place these facts before the public in a series of hearings, featuring the former president's own men and women, and through state and local officials—almost all of them Republicans. If these hearings have looked different, it is because they are. Although our committee is composed of Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, we all have the same objective: to tell the true story of what happened when a president's lust for power almost destroyed our democracy. Such unity of purpose is rare on Capitol Hill, and the tone, tenor and quality of our hearings have reflected that.

We have not concluded our investigation or our hearings. New witnesses and evidence continue to come forward, and we continue to assemble the facts for both the present and history.

Our role is not a prosecutorial one; that responsibility will fall upon the Justice Department. But I believe that our committee has already put forward sufficient facts to warrant an investigation of the former president for possible violation of several criminal laws, including conspiracy to defraud, interference with official proceedings and potentially even more serious offenses related to the violence of Jan. 6. Attorney General Merrick Garland has pledged that the department will follow the evidence wherever it leads, and it has led to Donald Trump.

Whatever the Department of Justice decides, one thing is certain: Trump must never hold the levers of power again. Not if we believe in the rule of law. Not if we cherish our democracy. Not if the truth of our founders—that someone whose character is "marked by every act which may define a tyrant" is unfit to lead a free people—remains self-evident.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

'This is no way to run a government'

By TINA SABLAN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Rep. Christina "Tina" Sablan is a member of the CNMI House of Representatives, and the Democratic candidate for governor in the 2022 general election along with her running mate for lieutenant governor, Leila Fleming Staffler. For more about Tina and Leila's vision for good governance and their plans for a government that is responsive, transparent, and ethical, visit www.sablanstaffler.com.

The abrupt transfer of Customs director Jose Mafnas to a nonexistent position in an entirely different department is political retaliation, plain for all to see. The complaint he has filed in court reveals much about the circumstances that led up to the transfer—from Mr. Mafnas' open support for another gubernatorial candidate, to his refusal to obey Governor Torres' "verbal instructions" to funnel a federally funded, multimillion-dollar procurement through the governor's brother. (Read the full complaint here: https://bit.ly/MafnasComplaint.)

Mr. Mafnas is not the first and will not be the last victim of this vindictive and childish administration. But he is one of the few to publicly challenge the Torres regime, and he deserves praise and support for courageously asserting his rights as a civil service employee and as a citizen. I encourage every public servant who is a victim of political retaliation to do the same.

Sadly, there have been numerous examples of political retaliation and intimidation in this administration over the years, and numerous examples of violations of the due process rights of civil service employees. Remember the mass furloughs? The illegal replacements of long-time civil servants with political hires? The sacking of the OMB director, and the pink slips handed out to government employees seen at non-GOP events or merely associated with non-GOP supporters? The retaliatory transfers of law enforcement officers suspected of disloyalty to this administration? This is no way to run a government.

In the Marianas we know too well the costs of public corruption, political intimidation, fear, and silence. Leila Fleming Staffler and I are firmly committed to ending this toxic culture in our government. Our administration will ensure respect for the law and the rights of all public service employees. We will protect and support whistleblowers. Honest, hardworking public servants should never have to fear losing their jobs because of who they vote for, or their political beliefs. Public servants deserve better. The people of the Marianas deserve better.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Celebrating Disability Pride Month

In the month of July, the disabled community all around the world celebrate Disability Pride Month. Celebrating Disability Pride, as described by AmeriDisability, is "accepting and honoring each person's uniqueness and seeing it as a natural beautiful part of human diversity."

On July 26, 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed. It prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in several areas, including employment, transportation, public accommodations, communications and access to state and local government' programs and services.

That same month, the city of Boston celebrated the first ever Disability Pride parade. A year after, parades were discontinued after the passing of one of the event leaders. It wasn't until July of 2004 that official parades and celebrations revived in other cities. In July 2015, the New York City mayor declared July the month of Disability Pride as it was the 25th anniversary of the ADA.

Having a disability is an identity like all other groups. There is a culture that people with disabilities share as a whole, and there are subcultures within each disability that someone identifies with. Meaning, they can take pride in their strength as someone with a disability and also participate in that culture along with those who have varying disabilities. They come together in unity, understanding the complexities of the world they have to move around in and how they can be referred to or treated. They can also acknowledge the subculture they participate in as someone who's deaf or utilizes a wheelchair, for example. These individuals share deeper nuances of their world, how people respond to them, or don't respond at all. Disabilities aren't always seen. It isn't that easy to place them into categories, nor should we try. They represent all walks of life and contribute in the most profound ways in their communities. These people are professionals, athletes, educators, first responders, writers, artists, our political officials, etc. They need to be at the table. They need to be respected; they need to be included and invited into mainstream discussions and decisions.

One of the mottos shared by many with disabilities is, "Nothing about us without us," i.e. please don't make decisions for us without our input. What can you do this month and beyond to support people with disabilities?

■ Always interrupt stereotypes and negative statements about people with disabilities. Interrupt comments made to or about someone in your presence.

■ Ensure people with disabilities are given the same opportunities for employment, inclusion, training, choices, and successes.

■ If you don't know, ask. People are open to someone taking an interest in who they are and asking questions, instead of making assumptions or just staring.

■ People with disabilities have a voice. Make sure to include them in conversations about accessibility and accommodations.

■ Don't assume the disabled person cannot speak for themselves. Speak to them, not just to their parents or personal assistant.

■ Ask them what language they prefer—person first or identity first. Many people in the disabled community prefer identity first language (disabled person) rather than person first language (person with a disability). Ask what their preference is.

■ Find out the appropriate ways to approach someone who's blind or hard of hearing. Understand that someone's wheelchair is an extension of themselves and touching it requires consent.

■ Include disability in conversation about equity and inclusion.

As we celebrate Disability Pride Month, Team Koka and Voices of the CNMI Tinian Chapter would like to recognize some successes on Tinian. The following agencies and businesses are deemed as accessible: Tinian Health Center, Northern Marianas College - Tinian Campus, Tinian High School, Tinian Elementary, JC Cafe (constructed a fully accessible restroom, modification on the restaurant accessible). Although there has been some progress, there is still a lot of improvement to be done in this area.

Unfortunately, the disabled community still faces many challenges. The most impacted challenge is the use of the word "handicapped" to describe disabilities. This word has a negative connotation and therefore, we should aim to get rid of the word in our vocabulary or when describing people with disabilities. Additionally, although some religious organizations have been accommodating children with disabilities, it is unfortunate that some do not, especially when religion is a very big part of our Chamoru culture. Another challenge that individuals face every day is when people use the ADA parking without the proper placard or utilize the space for "just a few minutes" while they're in the store or in the building. Lastly, people fail to recognize the difference between complaining and advocating. Schools teach their students with disabilities about advocacy and their rights just to be seen as "complaining" when they practice those advocacy skills in the community. Understand that when they are making requests for events and places to be accessible, they aren't complaining. They are advocating for a way to be included.

Frances H. Diaz
Tinian

Sources: zcenter.org; ada.gov; ameridisability.com

Rat Race

LITERARY NOOK
By BOB COLDEEN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Bob Coldeen is a longtime TV journalist in the CNMI and was the news director/ reporter of KSPN 2.

Plop
Another ripe avocado drops
its ass on the green grass.
Rats scurry to eat the deep purple treat
for there are tree owners to beat,
to tease as they nibble, not devour,
on a battlefield where they got power.
Why do they only take a bite or two,
leaving the rest for us to eschew?

"Egads, you rats, scat!"

Another cado suffers a horrible rat bite
making it a most unappetizing sight.
The husband says to the wife,
"Honey, this is no kind of life.
From now on, we pick them all green,
wait for them to ripen whole and clean."

No more drops, no more plops.
The family firmly declared, "This is our crop!"
The rats laughed. They didn't care.
They just went elsewhere.
To the store? No, next door.

HAWLEY

From Page 8

took to the floor to be the first voice calling to throw out millions of Americans' votes cast fairly and legally for the rightful winner in a presidential election. And never forget: He was joined in his campaign to discard ballots by Kansas Sen. Roger Marshall.

Chung's photo of Hawley and his salute has become iconic. Taking a page from the Trump playbook, Hawley has embraced the famous image, flagrantly violating copyright laws by slapping it on T-shirts and camouflage beer koozies, and selling them on his political campaign's fundraising website. Politico, owner of the image, sent a cease-and-desist demanding the merchandise be removed from sale. Of course, Hawley refused—a defiance shameful and shameless in equal measure.

Shame, clearly, is not a motivating factor for any number of Republicans still caught up in Trumpworld. Hawley has never apologized for attempting to reinstall a man who everyone around him knew had lost the election, as witness testimony continues to confirm. Surely the Yale and Stanford grad isn't gullible enough to believe the craven lies about tampering with voting machines and dead people casting ballots that ooze through social media.

We now know Hawley's conscience won't make him suddenly do the right thing and tell the Jan. 6 committee what he knew and when he knew it. But as GOP Rep. Liz Cheney said Thursday while announcing more public hearings to come: "Doors have opened, new subpoenas have been issued, and the dam has begun to break. … We have considerably more to do." The committee has delivered on its promises so far.

Since Trump left office, many insiders have revealed in interviews and tell-alls that the administration really was as unethical and chaotic as its worst detractors claimed all along. (Gee, thanks guys, but why couldn't you have come clean back before the damage was done?) History will not look kindly upon the dead-enders who continued to defend Trump long after it became apparent his conduct was indefensible. When Cheney is saying even more birds are singing, believe her.

Sen. Josh Hawley might not fear a little mockery of his hasty flight from Capitol marauders. But he might be justified if he's afraid of what emails or text messages some previously loyal staffer might be considering turning over to the House committee. Stay tuned to the hearings.

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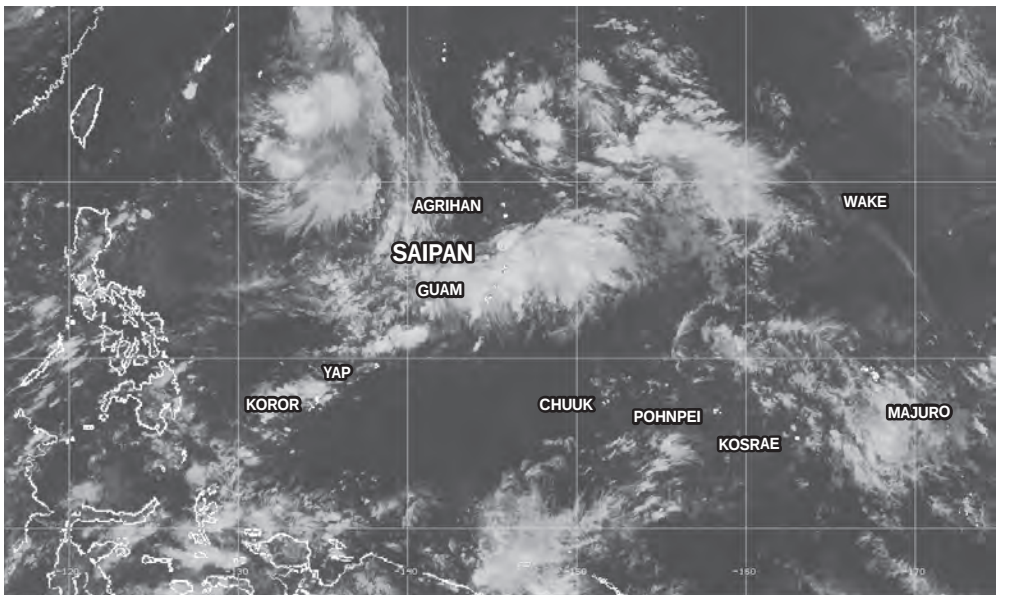
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm. Some of the storms could produce heavy rainfall.	Partly sunny	A 30 percent chance of showers. Partly sunny,	Mostly sunny	Partly sunny
89º 78º	87º 77º	87º 80º	89º 79º	87º 79º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:39 AM, TUESDAY, JULY 26, 2022

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite imagery indicates cells are building along the southwest and east quadrants of the tropical disturbance that is situated just west of Saipan. Ritidian buoy indicates seas are about 3 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

■ Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.

■ Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.

■ Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.

■ Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.

■ Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.

■ Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html

■ Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

■ Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.

■ Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

■ Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:

• Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.

• Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

• Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

• Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°
Palau	Thunderstorms	83° / 76°
Yap	Scattered Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	87° / 79°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	87° / 77°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	87° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	87° / 78°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:58 AM	6:48 PM
Thursday	5:58 AM	6:48 PM
Friday	5:58 AM	6:48 PM
Saturday	5:58 AM	6:47 PM
Sunday	5:59 AM	6:47 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	4:22 AM	5:51 PM	-
Thursday	5:14 AM	6:38 PM	-
Friday	6:06 AM	7:22 PM	-
Saturday	6:58 AM	8:03 PM	-
Sunday	7:48 AM	8:42 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	75° / 63°
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	43° / 21°
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	73° / 63°
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	79° / 64°
London	Showers	55° / 34°
Los Angeles	Sunny	78° / 50°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	90° / 75°
Melbourne	Rain	73° / 52°
Miami	Mostly Sunny	81° / 72°
New York	Partly Cloudy	50° / 34°
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	55° / 45°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	43° / 36°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	54° / 30°
Rome	Sunny	57° / 41°
Salem	Cloudy	52° / 39°
San Francisco	Sunny	60° / 45°
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	39° / 19°
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	54° / 39°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	48° / 33°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
1:09 AM	Low Tide	1.43
5:39 AM	High Tide	1.85
1:14 PM	Low Tide	-0.01
8:33 PM	High Tide	1.89

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 18, 2022

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily
UA156	6:30PM	7:15PM	6

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	6:00AM	8:00AM	Daily
UA193	7:05PM	10:55PM	5 via Palau
UA183	7:10PM	9:10PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW9308	3:30PM	7:20PM	Daily
7C3405	3:30PM	7:25PM	3, 4, 6
RS112	3:45PM	7:30PM	3, 6 up to July 2 only
7C3405	3:50PM	7:45PM	7
OZ624	4:00PM	7:40PM	3, 6

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	2:00PM	5:20PM	3, 7
BX621	3:10PM	6:30PM	3, 7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily
UA112	4:40PM	5:30PM	6

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

PR110	10:00PM	4:00AM+1	Daily
UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:25PM	6:15AM+1	5 via Palau
UA184	11:50PM	5:40AM+1	5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	1,2,3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:45AM+1	5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	8:30AM	2:10PM	3, 4, 6, 7
RS111	8:45AM	2:05PM	3, 6 up to July 2 only
TW9307	9:00AM	2:30PM	4, 6, 7
OZ623	9:00AM	2:30PM	3, 6
TW9307	9:15AM	2:30PM	1, 2, 3, 5

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	8:00AM	1:00PM	3, 7
BX621	8:00AM	1:10PM	3, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

Fed set to impose another big rate hike to fight inflation

WASHINGTON (AP)—Conflicting signs about the health of the U.S. economy have thrust the Federal Reserve into a difficult spot.

With inflation raging at a four-decade high, the job market strong and consumer spending still solid, the Fed is under pressure to raise interest rates aggressively.

But other signs suggest the economy is slowing and might even have shrunk in the first half of the year. Such evidence would typically lead the Fed to stop raising rates—or even cut them.

For now, though, the Fed is focused squarely on its inflation fight, and this week it's set to announce another hefty hike in its benchmark interest rate. Together with its previous rate increases, the Fed's moves will make borrowing costlier for individuals and companies and likely weaken the economy over time.

"Until there's very clear evidence of the labor market beginning to meaningfully deteriorate, the No. 1 focus for the Fed must be inflation," said Matthew Luzzetti, chief U.S. economist at Deutsche Bank.

When it ends its latest policy meeting Wednesday, the Fed is expected to impose a second consecutive three-quarter-point hike, elevating its key rate to a range of 2.25% to 2.5%. It will be its fourth rate hike since March, when it announced a quarter-point increase. Since then, with inflation setting new four-decade highs, the central bank has tightened credit ever more aggressively.

By raising borrowing rates, the Fed makes it costlier to take out a mortgage or an auto or business loan. In turn, consumers and businesses will likely borrow and spend less, cooling the economy and slowing price increases. The Fed's hikes have already led to a doubling of the average rate on a 30-year fixed mortgage in the past year, to 5.5%, and home sales have tumbled. The central bank is betting it can slow growth just enough to tame inflation yet not so much as to trigger a recession—a risk that many analysts fear may end badly.

The Fed's rate hikes aren't suited to address all the causes of high inflation. Higher borrowing rates can reduce spending. But they cannot reverse other factors, notably the global shortages of food, energy, factory parts and other items, which have been worsened by Russia's war against Ukraine and COVID-19-related shutdowns in China.

It will also likely take months for the Fed's higher rates to reduce spending on airline flights, restaurant meals and other services. Many economists worry that this means the Fed will have to clamp down even harder on consumer and business demand, to bring it into balance with the economy's restricted supply of goods and labor.

A news conference that Chair Jerome Powell will hold Wednesday—and whatever signals, if any, he sends about the Fed's next steps—will draw intense interest. Since the Fed met in June, the government has reported that inflation accelerated to a 9.1% annual rate, the most since 1981. Though that jump reflected a spike in gas prices, which have since declined, inflation worsened even after excluding the volatile energy and food categories.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Walmart cuts profit outlook as shoppers adapt to inflation

NEW YORK (AP)—Walmart Inc. on Monday lowered its profit outlook for the second quarter and the full year, saying rising prices on food and gas are forcing shoppers to cut back on discretionary items, particularly clothing, that carry higher profit margins. That behavior is forcing the nation's largest retailer, based in Bentonville, Arkansas, to step up discounts on general merchandise items like home furnishings and electronics to move inventory. Walmart's shares fell nearly 10% in after-hours trading Monday. Walmart's move to lower its profit outlook in the middle of the quarter is rare and raised worries about how inflation, the highest in 40 years, is affecting the entire consumer sector. The stocks of many major retailers, including Target, Macy's and Kohl's, fell following Walmart's Monday announcement. Several big consumer companies, including Amazon, McDonald's and Procter & Gamble, are set to report their quarterly earnings results this week.

Budget airline Allegiant cuts profit outlook on rising costs

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Shares of Allegiant Air's parent company tumbled in afterhours trading Monday after the budget airline gave a disappointing preview of its second-quarter earnings that it said were undercut by higher costs, including fuel. Allegiant Travel Co. said after the market closed that it expects to report earnings of 62 cents per share. The company had previously forecast profit of 92 cents per share, and analysts had been even more bullish, expecting $1.36 per share, according to a FactSet survey. Its shares traded down more than 18% in extended trading on Monday. Allegiant's woes echoed what bigger airlines have been saying the past two weeks: Demand for tickets remains strong as people want to travel following more than two years of pandemic, but costs are rising rapidly for fuel, labor and other expenses.

Biden presses computer chips case in advance of Senate vote

WASHINGTON (AP)—Calling semiconductors "the building blocks for the modern economy," President Joe Biden on Monday asked Congress to move quickly and send him a bipartisan bill designed to boost the computer chips industry and high-tech research in the United States. The Senate was originally expected to take a critical vote in the evening to advance the legislation, but Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., announced that storms on the East Coast had disrupted travel plans for several senators and that he would be delaying the vote until Tuesday morning. The bill needs support from at least 60 senators to clear procedural hurdles and place it on a path to final passage later this week, giving Biden a signature win on legislation his administration says is necessary to protect national security and help the U.S. better compete with China. The bill provides about $52 billion in grants and other incentives for the semiconductor industry as well as a 25% tax credit for those companies that build chip plants in the U.S. Supporters say those incentives are necessary to compete with other nations that are also spending billions of dollars to lure manufacturers.

Ex-US congressman among 9 charged in insider trading cases

NEW YORK (AP)—A former U.S. congressman from Indiana, technology company executives, a man training to be an FBI agent, and an investment banker were among nine people charged in four separate and unrelated insider trading schemes revealed on Monday with the unsealing of indictments in New York City.

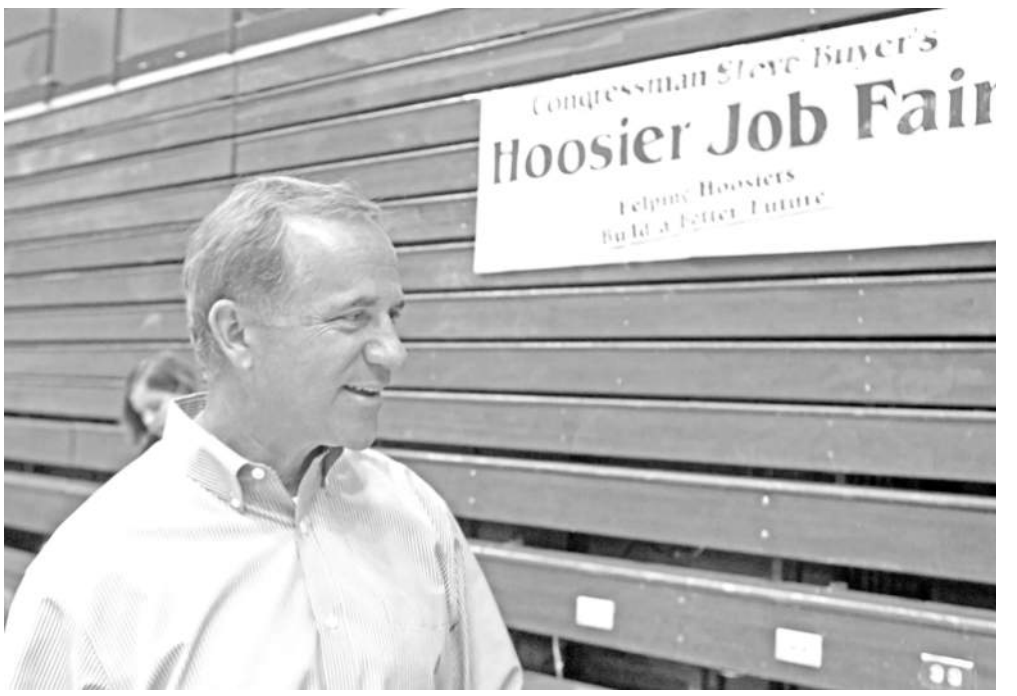
It was one of the most significant attacks by law enforcement on insider trading in a decade, and a prosecutor and other federal officials pledged fresh enthusiasm for similar prosecutions in the future. They said the cheating resulted in millions of dollars of illegal profits for defendants situated on both coasts and in middle America.

Stephen Buyer was accused in court papers of engaging in insider trading during the $26.5 billion merger of T-Mobile and Sprint, announced in April 2018. An indictment identified him as someone who misappropriated secrets he learned as a consultant to make $350,000 illegally.

Buyer, 63, of Noblesville, Indiana, was arrested Monday in his home state. He served on committees with oversight over the telecommunications industry while a Republican congressman from 1993 through 2011.

He was described as making purchases of Sprint securities in March 2018 just a day after attending a golf outing with a T-Mobile executive who told him about the company's then-nonpublic plan to acquire Sprint, according to a civil case brought against Buyer by the Securities and Exchange Commission in a federal court in Manhattan.

Authorities said he also engaged in illegal trading in 2019 ahead of Navigant Consulting Inc.'s acquisition by consulting and advisory firm Guidehouse. Documents said he leveraged his work as a consultant and lobbyist to make illegal profits.



AP

Indiana Congressman Stephen Buyer talks during a Hoosier Job Fair, July 19, 2010, at Jefferson High School in Lafayette, Ind.

EU struggles with how to cut off its reliance on Russian gas

BRUSSELS (AP)—European Union nations struggled Monday to find common ground on how to wean the bloc off its reliance on Russian natural gas, seeking to appease wary, stressed consumers at home while upholding unity as Moscow turns down the tap.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has weaponized gas exports to pressure the bloc into reducing its sanctions over the war in Ukraine or to push other political aims. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday called Russia's cuts to gas deliveries "a form of terror" and urged European countries to respond by tightening sanctions on Moscow.

On the eve of an emergency meeting to discuss plans to cut EU gas use 15% over the coming months, envoys on Monday were still brokering a possible compromise that should keep all 27 nations in line by Tuesday night.

"This a still a work in progress," said a senior diplomat who asked not to be identified because the talks were still ongoing.

The bloc is bracing for a possible full Russian cutoff of natural gas supplies that could add a big chill to the upcoming winter, leaving nations like economic juggernaut Germany especially exposed. But some other EU countries, like Spain and Portugal, which have little dependence on Russian gas, do not want to force such a major cut on their people.

Russia has cut off or reduced gas to a dozen EU countries so far. On Monday, it said it will slash flows this week through a major pipeline to Germany by another half, to 20% of capacity. The Nord Stream 1 pipeline reductions further endanger goals to fill European gas storage tanks for winter as envoys haggled over EU plans.

It was what European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen had seen coming when she announced the plan. She is convinced that Putin will cut off natural gas exports to try to wreak economic and political havoc in Europe this winter.

"This is exactly the sort of scenario the president was referring to last week," said Commission spokesman Eric Mamer. "This development validates our analysis. We therefore hope that the Council will adopt an appropriate response" on Tuesday.

The diplomat said ambassadors had been working nonstop on the divisive issue and had sought to clip the powers of the executive European Commission, which under its plan, could sidestep member countries to impose such reductions.

Nation

Firefighters slow growth of California blaze near Yosemite

JERSEYDALE, Calif. (AP) — Firefighters have significantly slowed the spread of a huge wildfire burning in a forest near Yosemite National Park that burned 55 homes and other buildings and forced thousands from their homes, officials said Monday.

"It was a successful day for aircraft and firefighters, resulting in minimal growth on the fire. Helicopters dropped 300,000 gallons of water on the fire. Crews continue to construct control lines and extinguish hot spots along existing lines," said a Monday night report by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or Cal Fire.

Thousands of residents from mountain communities were still under evacuation orders Monday while smoke from the fire drifted more than 200 miles (322 kilometers), reaching Lake Tahoe, parts of Nevada and the San Francisco Bay Area, officials said.

"It's been just horrendous with the air quality," said Kim Zagaris, an advisor with the Western Fire Chiefs Association, which maps wildfires across the country.

More than 2,500 firefighters with aircraft support were battling the blaze, known as the Oak Fire, that erupted last Friday southwest of the park, near the town of Midpines in Mariposa County. Officials described "explosive fire behavior" on Saturday as flames made runs through bone-dry vegetation caused by the worst drought in decades.

AP

A helicopter flies above flames while battling the Oak Fire in Mariposa County, Calif., Sunday, July 24, 2022.

The blaze had consumed 27 square miles (70 square kilometers) of forest land, with 16% containment, Cal Fire said. The cause was under investigation.

Firefighters on Monday struggled in steep terrain in temperatures that reached the mid- to high 90s.

On Sunday, ground forces protected homes as air tankers dropped retardant on 50-foot (15-meter) flames racing along ridgetops east of the tiny community of Jerseydale.

There are two major blazes burning in California, which is experiencing a fairly typical ramp-up to what is sure to be an active fire year once California's infamous Santa Ana and Diablo wind events begin in September, Zagaris said.

"We've been fortunate. We're not quite as far along as we were at this time last year," he said. "But the fuels, the vegetation, are much dryer than they were last year. It's so dry out there."

Zagaris compared the wildfires in California this year to 2008, when few blazes burned early but a mid-summer barrage of lightning hit the state "and before we knew it there were 2,000 fires burning in the northern part of the state."

Evacuations were in place Monday for over 6,000 people living across a several-mile span of the sparsely populated fire zone in the Sierra Nevada foothills, though a handful of residents defied the orders and stayed behind, said Adrienne Freeman, a U.S. Forest Service spokesperson.

ACROSS THE NATION

76-year-old rape suspect arrested in 2 unsolved murders

FAIRFIELD, Calif. (AP)—A 76-year-old man suspected of a 2021 rape has been arrested in the killings of two women that had been unsolved for decades, authorities said. James Ray Gary, of Fairfield, was arrested last week in the 1980 killing of Latrelle Lindsay of Union City and the 1996 killing of Winifred Douglas of Berkeley, the Solano County Sheriff's Office said. DNA collected during a 2021 rape investigation matched DNA collected from both crime scenes. On July 18, the office was notified that a DNA sample from Gary matched all three crimes. A warrant was obtained for his arrest and to search his home. He was arrested the following day, officials said. It was not immediately known if Gary has an attorney who can speak on his behalf. The Solano County Public Defender and the Solano County District did not immediately return phone messages from The Associated Press seeking comment. In July of 1980, Lindsay, 46, of Union City, was found dead inside her home. She had been raped and strangled, police said.

Police: Woman opened fire in Dallas airport; cop shot her

DALLAS (AP)—A 37-year-old woman fired several gunshots, apparently at the ceiling, inside of Dallas' Love Field Airport on Monday before an officer shot and wounded her, authorities said. The woman was dropped off at the airport at about 11 a.m., walked inside near the ticketing counters and entered a bathroom, Dallas police Chief Eddie Garcia said at a news conference. She emerged wearing a hooded sweatshirt or some other clothing that she hadn't arrived in, pulled a gun and fired several shots, apparently at the ceiling, he said. "At this point, we don't know where exactly the individual was aiming," Garcia said. An officer nearby shot the woman in her "lower extremities," wounding her and enabling her to be taken into custody, Garcia said. She was taken to a local hospital for treatment.

Principal of school where massacre occurred placed on leave

UVALDE, Texas (AP)—The principal of the Texas elementary school where a gunman killed 19 students and two teachers says the principal was placed on administrative leave Monday, her attorney said. Robb Elementary School Principal Mandy Gutierrez was placed on paid administrative leave by Uvalde school Superintendent Hal Harrell, said attorney Ricardo Cedillo of San Antonio in a terse statement to The Associated Press. Cedillo did not provide any further information on the reason for the move or any other comment. A message to a spokeswoman for the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District was not immediately returned. A legislative committee blamed Gutierrez and an assistant for knowing a lock to the classroom where the killings happened on May 24 wasn't working and not having it repaired.

Northwestern US heat wave could create the hottest day on Tuesday

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—The temperatures in Portland, Oregon, could top 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.8 Celsius) on Tuesday, making it likely the hottest day of a week-long heat wave for the Pacific Northwest region that rarely sees such scorching weather.

Forecasters issued an excessive heat warning for parts of Oregon and Washington state. Temperatures could hit the 90s (32 C) in Seattle and 110 F (37.7 Celsius) in eastern parts of Oregon and Washington.

While interior parts of the states often experience high temperatures, those kind of hot blasts do not happen nearly as often in Portland and Seattle.

"To have five-day stretches or a weeklong stretch above 90 degrees is very, very rare for the Pacific Northwest," said Vivek Shandas, professor of climate adaptation at Portland State University.

As the northwestern U.S. heats up, scorching temperatures in the Northeast are expected to cool in coming days.

Philadelphia hit 99 degrees (37 Celsius) Sunday before factoring in humidity. Newark, New Jersey, had its fifth consecutive day of 100 degrees or higher, the longest such streak since records began in 1931. Boston also hit 100 degrees, surpassing the previous daily record high of 98 degrees (36.6 Celsius) set in 1933.

Residents and officials in the Northwest have been trying to adjust to the likely reality of longer, hotter heat waves following last summer's deadly "heat dome" weather phenomenon that prompted record temperatures and deaths.

Official: Grass fire torches as many as 20 Dallas-area homes

DALLAS (AP)—A grass fire apparently sparked by a mower swept about 300 yards across a tinder-dry open field to a suburban Dallas subdivision Monday, burning through wooden fences and torching as many as 20 homes, officials said.

The blaze in Balch Springs was the latest in drought-stricken North Texas, which has been vulnerable to explosive wildfires for at least two weeks.

The mower was being used in the open field to trim the brush when its blade struck some debris and generated a spark that ignited the blaze, said Balch Springs Fire Marshal Sean Davis. The fire spread quickly north from the shoulder of Interstate 20 to the subdivision about 4 p.m. Monday, causing varying degrees of damage to 14 to 20 homes before the flames were contained, Davis said.

There were no immediate reports of injuries, he said.

Aerial video showed the fire spread up and down the street as firefighters and homeowners working in 103-degree heat tried to prevent the fire from spreading to more of the bricked frame homes. One end of the fire spread to a home where a panicked dog ran back and forth before running through a pet door at a neighboring home. The fate of pets was not immediately known, Davis said.

Fire crews from Dallas and other nearby suburbs have gone to the scene to assist Balch Springs crews.

Firefighting teams have thrown dozens of extra crew members into the fight over the weekend against a North Texas wildfire that has destroyed 16 homes and damaged five others, officials said Monday.

The crews have held the Chalk Mountain Fire effects in check at 10 1/2 square miles (27 1/4 square kilometers) since last week, according to the Southern Area Blue, Type-I Incident Management Team.

Team leaders say they have added 126 firefighters and extra fire engines and bulldozers to the 190 already clearing fire lines over the weekend 50 miles (80 kilometers) southwest of Fort Worth, expanding the containment from 10% to 20%.

Asia

PH Marcos vows recovery but quiet on human rights

AP

New Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., delivers his first state of the nation address in, Quezon city, Philippines, Monday, July 25, 2022.

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. vowed to considerably ease poverty, boost economic recovery and defend the country's territory in his first key policy speech Monday that avoided contentious issues like human rights and pervasive corruption.

Amid soaring costs of living following the coronavirus pandemic and the global fallout from the Ukraine war, Marcos Jr. said "we can no longer afford another lockdown."

"I do not intend to diminish the risks and challenges that we face in this turbulent time in global history," he said, adding that "I see sunlight filtering through these dark clouds."

With the "best Filipino minds" working in his administration, the president said: "We will endure."

Activists rejected his upbeat outlook and criticized his silence on human rights issues, his plan to deal with decades-old communist and Muslim insurgencies, allegations of widespread extrajudicial killings and his family's legal troubles, including the nonpayment of a huge estate tax.

They said scant details in his state of the nation address did not inspire public confidence.

The presidential speech "suffers from a crisis of clarity, direction and vision," the left-wing Akbayan group said, adding that Marcos Jr. offered "nothing new, bold or extraordinary" to confront the country's multiple crises.

About 5,000 flag-waving protesters marched ahead of his speech. They issued a range of demands, from government aid and fuel subsidy to justice for human rights victims under Marcos Jr.'s father, the late dictator who was ousted in a 1986 pro-democracy "People Power" uprising.

They asked Marcos Jr. to outline a clear roadmap out of the economic hardships.

More than 20,000 police, anti-riot contingents and troops were deployed in metropolitan Manila, where a gun ban has been imposed, to secure the late-afternoon ceremony at the House of Representatives. Thousands of pro-Marcos supporters were allowed to gather outside the heavily secured compound for a musical concert.

Marcos Jr. did not announce any new taxes, except on online services, and said the bureaucracy would be streamlined but did not specify if that's includes layoffs.

The Philippines will adopt an independent foreign policy, he said, and added: "I will not preside over any process that will abandon even a square inch of territory of the Republic of the Philippines to any foreign power."

It was an obvious reference to Manila's long-running feud with China and four other claimants in the disputed South China Sea.

He also promised to improve the country's health system to deal with continuing coronavirus threats.

The Philippines has been among the countries worst-hit in Asia by the two-year pandemic after more than 60,000 deaths and extended lockdowns sent the economy to its worst recession in 2020 since World War II and worsened poverty, unemployment, hunger and debts.

In a bid to boost agricultural output and foster economic growth, Marcos Jr. said he would order a one-year suspension of land and interest payments by farmers, who could then invest the money to boost production.

Marcos Jr. received more than 31 million votes of the more than 55 million cast in the May 9 election — a stunning victory for a family whose reputation was tarnished by their father's legacy.

His allies strongly dominate both chambers of Congress. His cousin, Rep. Martin Romualdez, was elected the House speaker and another close ally, Juan Miguel Zubiri, as Senate president on Monday.

His huge electoral mandate, however, could be eroded if people don't feel any significant relief from their hardships, University of the Philippines professor Jean Franco said.

"I'm not so sure how long the rest of the 31 million will latch on to Marcos Jr., especially if the economic crisis continues," Franco said, adding the new president did not have the tough and populist image that kept the high ratings of his predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte.

Ferdinand Marcos was toppled in 1986 and died in 1989 while in exile in Hawaii without admitting any wrongdoing, including accusations that he, his family and associates amassed an estimated $5 billion to $10 billion while in office.

World

Gunman slain after rampage kills 2, hurts 2 near Vancouver

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP)—The shaken residents of a Vancouver suburb are recovering from a gunman's hours-long overnight rampage that killed two people and wounded two more before he was shot to death by police.

Authorities initially had said it appeared the attacker was targeting homeless people before dawn Monday, but later said the motive was under investigation. Shootings were reported at a homeless center but also at other sites.

Evidence of the blitz was scattered around Langley, including an overturned bicycle spilling personal possessions onto a street and a shopping cart with someone's belongings.

Officials said a woman was critically wounded in the first shooting, at midnight at a casino. A man was shot to death at 3 a.m. at a residential complex that provides support for people transitioning out of homelessness. At 5 a.m., the third shooting killed a second man at a bus stop. Then another man was shot in the leg near a highway bypass at 5:45 a.m.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police said an emergency response team confronted the gunman far from the fourth attack. Officers fatally shot him, said Ghalib Bhayani, an RCMP superintendent.

Police identified the suspect as Jordan Daniel Goggin, 28, of Surrey, British Columbia.

Authorities said they were working to determine the motive behind the attack. It was not known if the shooter and his victims were acquainted, Bhayani said.

He told reporters that the suspect's death would be subject to an investigation by the Independent Investigations Office of British Columbia, a civilian-led police oversight agency.

The shootings roiled Langley, a town of 29,000 people about 30 miles (48 kilometers) southeast of Vancouver. The town features a variety of shops and restaurants and almost 350 acres (142 hectares) of parks. Many residents moved there for its less expensive housing and commute to Vancouver, the largest city in the province of British Columbia.

Most of the shootings were in downtown Langley. One was in neighboring Langley Township.

After the shooting began, ambulances and police vehicles converged at a mall. The area was cordoned off with yellow police tape and a major intersection was closed. A black tent was set up over one of the crime scenes.

An unmarked police SUV at one of the shooting scenes, near a bus depot, had at least seven bullet holes in the windshield and one through the driver's window.

Mass shootings are less common in Canada than in the United States. The deadliest gun rampage in Canadian history happened in 2020 when a man disguised as a police officer shot people in their homes and set fires across the province of Nova Scotia, killing 22 people.

Pope apologizes for 'catastrophic' school policy in Canada

MASKWACIS, Alberta (AP)—Pope Francis issued a historic apology Monday for the Catholic Church's cooperation with Canada's "catastrophic" policy of Indigenous residential schools, saying the forced assimilation of Native peoples into Christian society destroyed their cultures, severed families and marginalized generations.

"I am deeply sorry," Francis said to applause from school survivors and Indigenous community members gathered at a former residential school south of Edmonton, Alberta. He called the school policy a "disastrous error" that was incompatible with the Gospel and said further investigation and healing is needed.

"I humbly beg forgiveness for the evil committed by so many Christians against the Indigenous peoples," Francis said.

In the first event of his weeklong "penitential pilgrimage," Francis traveled to the lands of four Cree nations to pray at a cemetery and then deliver the long-sought apology at nearby powwow ceremonial grounds. Four chiefs escorted the pontiff in a wheelchair to the site near the former Ermineskin Indian Residential School, and presented him with a feathered headdress after he spoke, making him an honorary leader of the community.

Francis' words went beyond his earlier apology for the "deplorable" abuses committed by missionaries and instead took institutional responsibility for the church's cooperation with Canada's "catastrophic" assimilation policy, which the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission said amounted to a "cultural genocide."

Slovakia may give Ukraine Russian-built warplanes

BRATISLAVA, Slovakia (AP)—Slovakia may consider donating its fleet of Soviet-era MiG warplanes to Ukraine, the Slovak defense minister said Monday.

Standing alongside his British counterpart Ben Wallace, Slovak Defense Minister Jaroslav Nad said "we can discuss the future" of his country's 11 MiG-29 fighter jets after they're grounded "most probably" by the end of August.

Slovakia has already negotiated with NATO allies the Czech Republic and Poland to monitor Slovak air space from the beginning of September.

"No decision has been made yet, no discussions are taking place as of now and we're ready to discuss that later on," said Nad.

Wallace said Britain isn't now considering giving Ukraine warplanes, but would offer Slovakia fighter jets to help guard its airspace.

Since the start of the invasion on Feb. 24, Ukraine has urged Western allies to provide it with warplanes to challenge Russia's air superiority.

However, the U.S. and its allies have been reluctant to give Ukraine the fighter jets it asks for, fearing it would provoke an escalatory response from Moscow, which has warned NATO that supplying Ukraine with combat aircraft could be tantamount to joining the conflict.

Nad said providing warplanes to Ukraine would require a broader discussion with allies about the consequences of such a delivery.

"But politically, yes, I can tell you there's a positive attitude of helping Ukrainians with Mi-29s."

Good Housekeeping

How to budget realistically for home repairs

Even in the best-maintained homes, stuff will wear out or break. Budgeting for these inevitable bills isn't always easy.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By LIZ WESTON
NERDWALLET

If you're a homeowner and haven't faced a big repair bill yet, just wait. Even in the best-maintained homes, stuff will wear out or break.

Budgeting for these inevitable bills isn't always easy. One commonly cited rule of thumb—to save 1% to 4% of your home's value each year for maintenance and repairs—can give homeowners sticker shock as real estate prices soar.

Accredited financial counselor Kate Mielitz recently purchased a home in Olympia, Washington, where the median listing price is $540,000, according to Realtor.com. Saving even 1% of that, or $5,400, would be a stretch for many owners, says Mielitz, who advises low- to middle-income clients. Saving 4% would mean putting aside $21,600 a year.

"I want to cry just looking at that number," Mielitz says.

Home costs depend on age, condition, climate

Rules of thumb have limited value, though, because how much you spend often depends on the age of your home, materials used and local climate patterns, among other factors, says John Wessling, president of the American Society of Home Inspectors.

For example, a laminated-shingle roof may last 35 to 40 years in St. Louis, where Wessling lives. But it could survive less than 15 years under Florida's harsh sun, he says. Extreme weather events can wreak havoc on homes as well.

How well you maintain your house also can have a big impact, Wessling says. Many homeowners don't notice window caulking that dries out and splits, for instance, but the water that seeps in can cause enormous damage.

"What might be a $12 or $15 repair could turn into spending $15,000 or $20,000 to rebuild that wall below the window," Wessling says.

Homeowners spent an average of $950 on home maintenance—or 0.6% of the home's value—in 2019, according to the latest American Housing Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. But the amounts varied considerably based on home sizes and age, among other factors. For instance, the percentage of a home's value spent on maintenance rose from 0.2% for homes built in the 2010s to 0.8% for homes built before 1960.

Deciding how much to set aside

People who prefer to hire others should expect to spend more than do-it-yourselfers, says Mischa Fisher, chief economist for home services referral website, Angi. Angi's survey of 2,934 homeowners who paid for home improvements last year found that they spent an average $3,018 on home maintenance, Fisher says. Those amounts typically ranged between 0.5% and 1% of their home's value. In addition, homeowners spent an average of $2,321 on emergency repairs.

Fisher recommends homeowners set aside up to 5% of their incomes for home maintenance as well as $10,000 to cover emergency repairs and system replacements.

Another approach is to save based on the remaining lifespan of your home's various components, including the roof, the heating and cooling systems, the hot water heater and appliances.

You can search online for charts and articles that estimate how long components typically last, Wessling says. Similar searches can give you an idea of replacement costs.

Alternatively, hire a home inspector to conduct a home maintenance inspection, Wessling says. Like the inspections that precede a home purchase, a maintenance inspection can estimate when various home systems likely will need to be replaced. Wessling says he typically charges $400 to $500 for inspections.

Let's say you have a 5-year-old air conditioning system, which typically have life spans of 15 to 20 years, Wessling says. If a new system would cost $4,000, you might save $400 a year to cover it. You could add a fudge factor to account for future inflation, which is, unfortunately, unpredictable. Wessling suggests adding 20% to the expected cost and an additional $100 a year to your savings.

Other ways to prepare for home costs

Consider setting up a home equity line of credit that you can tap if repair bills exceed what you've saved. These lines of credit tend to be less expensive than many alternatives, such as credit cards. Just be sure you can make the payments: If you don't, the lender can foreclose on your home.

People who struggle to save also might consider buying a home warranty, which can cover repairs and replacements for a home's systems and appliances, Mielitz says. Her current warranty costs about $800 a year, while service visits to fix any problem cost $75 each.

Such contracts have their downsides: The customer doesn't control who does the repair, for example, and what's covered depends on the policy's terms. Consumer Reports recommends that people "self-insure" instead by putting the money they'd spend on a home warranty into a savings account earmarked for home repairs and replacements.

But Mielitz, who has purchased home warranties since 2008, says the contracts give her peace of mind at a reasonable cost.

"It's kind of like car insurance. Hopefully you don't need it, but you've got it if you do," Mielitz says.

The State of Home Spending is based on Angi analysis of surveys fielded to 6,400 consumers between October 4 and October 7, 2021. Statistics on home maintenance and repair spending were based on responses of 2,934 homeowners and are a nationally representative sample of the home spending population.

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ON THE NET

- NerdWallet: What is a home warranty, and how does it work?
- https://bit.ly/nerdwallet-what-is-a-home-warranty

Construction curveball? Don't forget the Change Order

By MICHAEL SCHROEDER
ANGIE'S LIST

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The change order could prove the only thing that stands between you and hundreds or thousands of dollars' worth of misunderstanding—or worse, unauthorized work that inflates the price of a project.

It's just a piece of paper, often only one sheet, and different companies write it up different ways. Yet when needed, the change order could prove the only thing that stands between you and hundreds or thousands of dollars worth of misunderstanding—or worse, unauthorized work that inflates the price of a project.

This addendum to the original contract ensures the service provider and customer are on the same page and that both sign the dotted line before making any changes to a job already in progress.

"You need to have a written record of the project," says Robert Criner, founder of Criner Remodeling , in Newport News, Va. "It keeps the job running smooth, and there aren't any surprises for anybody." Criner serves as vice chair of the NAHB Remodelers, which represents the interests of the National Association of Homebuilders' remodeling industry members.

For a construction or remodeling job—a common place for the change order—it details that project-already-underway switch in tile styles you asked for in the bathroom or outlines additional work a contractor needs to do after finding rot under the floor. The written agreement should communicate changes to job scope, how these impact cost, when you're expected to pay (if it adds to the price tag) and any changes to the project completion date, since modifications often push that deadline back, Criner says.

He prefers to call them "change requests" since they're optional. That's another reason to get changes in writing first, experts say, so you can review the details before proceeding with work.

Highly rated contractors say most change orders occur as a result of customers' suggested tweaks once the project has started. Unforeseen issues can legitimately result in change orders on the contractor's side, too, but experts caution consumers to be wary of an endless stream of paperwork.

"Unfortunately, there are contractors out there that rely on change orders to make their margins," says Charlie Griffey, owner of Griffey Remodeling n Columbus, Ohio. "When you hear about people low-balling their estimates, it comes down to how detailed is their proposal and scale of work?"

In advance of signing off on any project, you should expect a thorough proposal that not only outlines what you'll physically see in the space—the new divider wall and paint color—but also what you don't, such as that pre-formed base put in before a shower install to prevent leaks.

"It's not unusual for us to have a six-page proposal on even a bathroom remodel," says Griffey, adding that this helps keep change orders to a minimum. "If it's not a detailed proposal or scope of work, there's always going to be change orders." On the other hand, highly rated contractors say the lack of any change orders to account for modifications made to a project already in progress is also a red flag.

Contractors and customers should work closely to determine early on if changes in project scope might be needed, whether the contractor suspects water damage that seeps into a wall or the project involves lead paint. "The proposal should at least note that some form of remediation could be included in the project and that could affect cost," Griffey says.

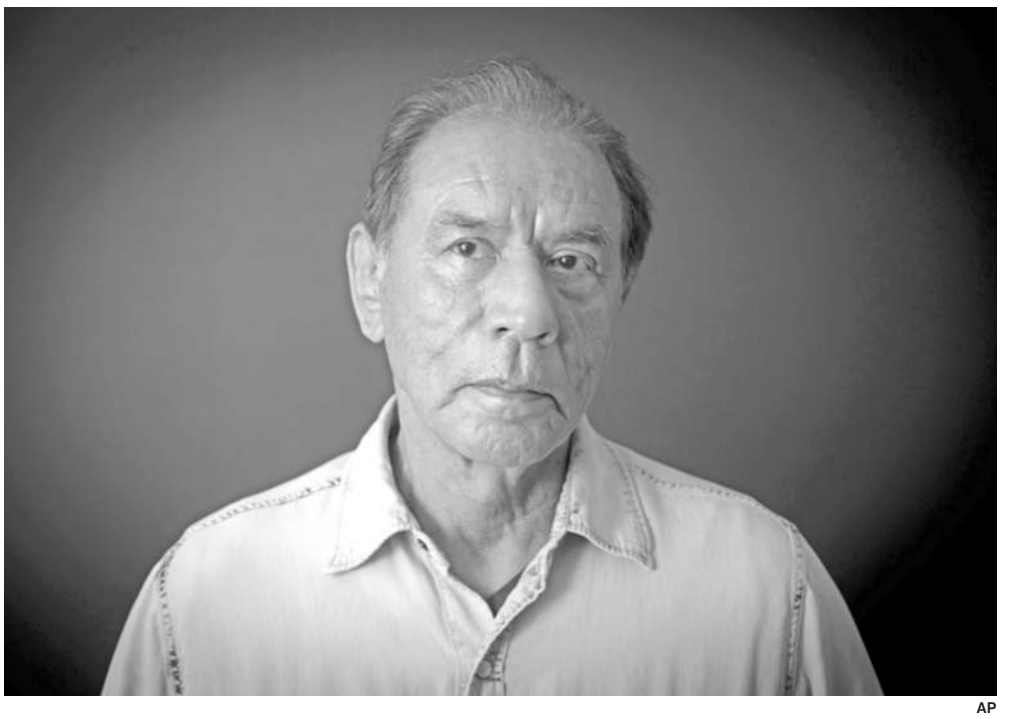
In addition, service providers say homeowners should steer clear of making changes late in a project, which can alter a contractor's schedule on other jobs. "That can affect the customer and contractor relationship," says Jason LaPay, president and owner of J&B Affordable Design and Remodeling in New Kensington, Penn. Ultimately, he and others say, good communication nurtures that relationship—in person, and in writing.

Michael Schroeder is a reporter at www.angieslist.com , a trusted provider of local consumer reviews and an online marketplace of services from top-rated providers.

Life & Style

For once, Cherokee actor Wes Studi cast as romantic co-star

By JAKE COYLE
AP FILM WRITER



AP

Actor Wes Studi poses for a portrait in New York on June 14, 2022, to promote his film "A Love Song."

In Wes Studi's potent and pioneering acting career, he has played vengeful warriors, dying prisoners and impassioned resistance leaders. For three decades, he has arrestingly crafted wide-ranging portraits of the Native American experience. But one thing he had never done in a movie is give someone a kiss.

"I thought it was about time, yeah," Studi, 74, says chuckling.

In "A Love Song," a tender indie drama starring another long-pigeonholed character actor, Dale Dickey, Studi is for the first time cast as a romantic co-star. Dickey ("Winter's Bone," "Hell or High Water") plays a woman camping by a mountain lake awaiting the visit of an old flame.

Studi, the Cherokee actor who masterfully played the defiant Huron warrior Magua in Michael Mann's "The Last of the Mohicans" and who got his first big break playing the character credited only as "the toughest Pawnee" in "Dances With Wolves," hasn't been limited entirely to what he calls "leather and feathers" roles. But it's sometimes taken some extra effort. When he heard Mann was making "Heat," Studi called up the director and got himself a part as a police detective.

But recently, Studi is increasingly getting a chance to play a wider array of characters. Along with Max Walker-Silverman's "A Love Song," which opens in theaters Friday, he's a recurring, funny guest star on Sterlin Harjo's "Reservation Dogs," the second season of which debuts Aug. 3 on Hulu.

"Hopefully it has to do with creating a better understanding of Native people by the general public," Studi said in an interview earlier this summer. "It does still exist, the misconception that we were all killed off and we don't exist anymore as peoples."

"That's essentially what I want to work on, and being a godfather to Native people in the industry," he adds.

With that Studi, sitting outside the lobby of his East Village hotel in New York, lets out such a howl of laughter that he nearly doubles over.

Why does that notion, one many would eagerly endorse, strike him as so hysterical? He entered Hollywood at a time when Indigenous people were regularly played by white actors. ("Sam Waterson is the one that kills me," Studi says, smiling.) A 2019 honorary Oscar made Studi the first Native American actor ever given an Academy Award.

"I can't take myself seriously when I say that, that's why," he answers, wiping tears from his eyes. "I guess it could be."

In person, Studi bears little resemblance to his fiercer screen roles. He's more like his characters in "A Love Song" and "Reservation Dogs." Amiable. Quick to laugh. Self-deprecating. A good storyteller. He exudes a bemused gratitude for the life he's found as an actor despite spending half his life without Hollywood ambitions. Studi grew up outside of Tahlequah, Oklahoma, and spoke only Cherokee until he was 5. His father was a ranch hand.

"I had never thought of acting, really, except once early in my life when I asked my dad when I saw Jay Silverheels on 'The Lone Ranger': 'Do you think anybody else can do what he does?'" Studi recalls. "He said, 'Probably not. Most of the actors you find are 6-foot tall, blond and blue-eyed."

At 17, Studi joined the National Guard and volunteered to fight in Vietnam. He served a tour in South Vietnam, and saw heavy action. When he returned home, Studi joined the American Indian Movement, taking part in the 1973 occupation of Wooded Knee. It wasn't until after he divorced in his late 30s that Studi gave acting a shot with a Tulsa community theater company his friend was involved with. Studi thought: What do I have to lose?

Studi performed wherever the theater company could mount a stage or in gaslight dinner theaters. In one play, he co-starred with Will Sampson and David Carradine. After a few years, Studi headed out to Los Angeles. He was in his early 40s.

"I still get the feeling of: Will I ever work again? That's always been a part of it," said Studi. "On the other hand, things have worked out that I have continued to work. I don't take that lightly. I'm especially grateful that I've been able to buy a home and stay in a good car for an extended period of time."

Studi remembers the Screen Actors Guild book of actors being a hefty tome while the then-newly founded American Indian Registry for the Performing Arts, listing Native actors, was a thin sliver. The parts available to him were also limited.

"The only real opening for a guy who looked like me was in Westerns," says Studi. "That's the only real door that was open to us in that point in time. It was simply a matter of being able to deliver lines and look like you mean it."

Joni Mitchell, 78, graces stage after nearly 2 decades away

NEWPORT, RI (AP)— Surprise! Joni Mitchell is back onstage.

The folk legend performed her first full-length concert on Sunday at the Newport Folk Festival in Rhode Island, The Boston Globe reported. Mitchell has contended with health complications since suffering an aneurysm in 2015, and her last full show was in late 2002, according to reports.

Seated in a wingback chair and wearing a blue beret and sunglasses, Mitchell joined festival headliner Brandi Carlile and a bevy of other artists, including Wynonna Judd, Allison Russell and Marcus Mumford. It was Mitchell's first Newport festival performance since 1969.

This was, Carlile explained, a recreation of the "Joni Jam" musical gatherings that have brought famous friends like Elton John to Mitchell's Los Angeles home in recent years.

And Mitchell wasn't there to just to sing. Halfway through the 13-song set, she played an electric guitar solo, which was her first time playing guitar in public since her aneurysm, Carlile said.

The ensemble played Mitchell's most familiar songs ("Circle Game," "Big Yellow Taxi") and a few of her favorites ("Love Potion No. 9," "Why Do Fools Fall in Love").

After their rendition of "Both Sides Now," Carlile was fighting back tears. Addressing the audience, she asked: "Did the world just stop?"

Desire for attention drives wife back to old boyfriend

DEAR ABBY: I have been married to my husband, "Jim," for three years, but we have been together for seven. It hasn't been an easy road for us. I love him, but he doesn't give me the attention or time that I want.

We have two kids we're raising from previous relationships. I didn't intentionally set out to hurt him, but three years ago, I reconnected with someone from my past I'll call "Mac." Mac and I have been off and on since reconnecting. Now I find myself not wanting to hurt either of them, but I'm in love with both of them.

I have thought about leaving Jim several times, but I can't bring myself to do it. I feel like I'm living a double life. Jim suspects that I'm talking to someone else but won't come out and ask me directly. All I want is to be happy and not hurt others in the process. Please give me some advice.

THOROUGHLY CONFUSED IN THE EAST

DEAR THOROUGHLY CONFUSED: Your husband is already suspicious. If you think you are doing him a favor by keeping silent, you are kidding yourself. He hasn't come out and asked you directly because he may be afraid of upsetting the apple cart. This is not just a "choice" you are making between two men. There are children involved, and where will a divorce leave them?

If your problem is Jim's lack of attention, don't you think you should tell him that? He won't enjoy hearing it, but it may give him a chance to rectify the situation. After that, if he decides he is through with you, your problem will be solved and you can enjoy your big Mac.

DEAR ABBY: I have a 5-year-old daughter, "Kim," whose father is not in the picture. If that's not tough enough, I don't know his whereabouts. I haven't heard from him in a year because he has had past trouble with the law. He obviously isn't interested in being involved in her life, and I've accepted that. However, he has family members who live not far away, and they haven't made any efforts either.

My teenage son is close with Kim's father's nephews, as they have been friends since he and I dated. I have been debating whether to reach out to my ex's sisters to address their lack of involvement in Kim's life. If they want no part of it, I guess I'll have to give up trying, although it's a shame she doesn't know her family on "Dad's side."

The main reason I want to contact them is so she can get to know them or, if they choose not to, I can at least explain to her (when she's older) that I tried. Do you think it's worth it to reach out? Or should their absence confirm their lack of interest?

UNCOMFORTABLE SITUATION

DEAR UNCOMFORTABLE: Because you feel it's important for Kim to know that you "at least tried" reaching out to her father's side of the family, give them a call. However, it seems to me their absence is already sending a strong message that—for whatever reason—they prefer to keep their distance.

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

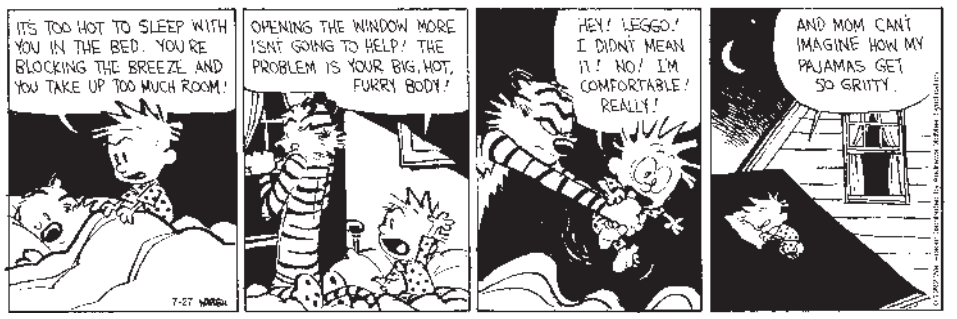
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


IT'S TOO HOT TO SLEEP WITH YOU IN THE BED. YOU'RE BLOCKING THE BREEZE, AND YOU TAKE UP TOO MUCH ROOM!
OPENING THE WINDOW MORE ISN'T GOING TO HELP! THE PROBLEM IS YOUR BIG, HOT, FURRY BODY!
HEY! LEGGO! I DIDN'T MEAN IT! NO! I'M COMFORTABLE! REALLY!
AND MOM CAN'T IMAGINE HOW MY PAJAMAS GET SO GRITTY.

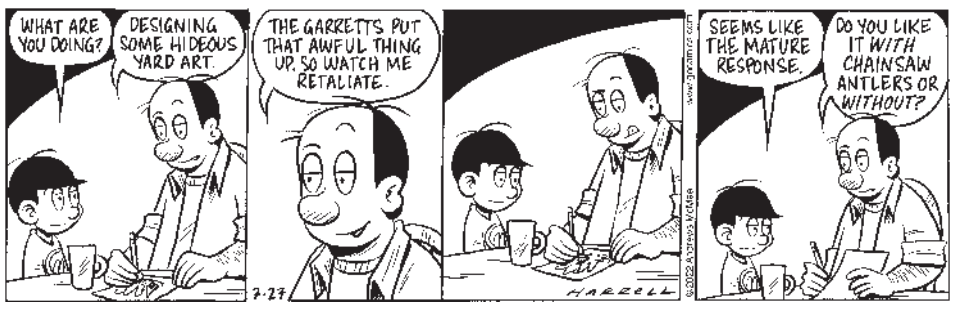
Garfield®

By Jim Davis

"DEAR ASK A DOG, IF YOU WERE A MILLIONAIRE, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?"
BARK! BARK! BARK!
DRINK FROM A TOILET
BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK!
A PLATINUM TOILET, WITH GOLD FILAGREE AND DIAMOND INLAY
JIM DAVIS 7-27

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
DESIGNING SOME HIDEOUS YARD ART.
THE GARRETTS PUT THAT AWFUL THING UP, SO WATCH ME RETALIATE.
SEEMS LIKE THE MATURE RESPONSE.
DO YOU LIKE IT WITH CHAINSAW ANTLERS OR WITHOUT?
7-27

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

STRIKE THREE!
I THINK THE OTHER TEAM IS STARTING TO TAKE YOU MORE SERIOUSLY AS A HITTER.
DID YOU NOTICE THERE WERE FEWER FIELDERS TAKING BATHROOM BREAKS WHEN YOU WERE AT BAT?
7-27

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

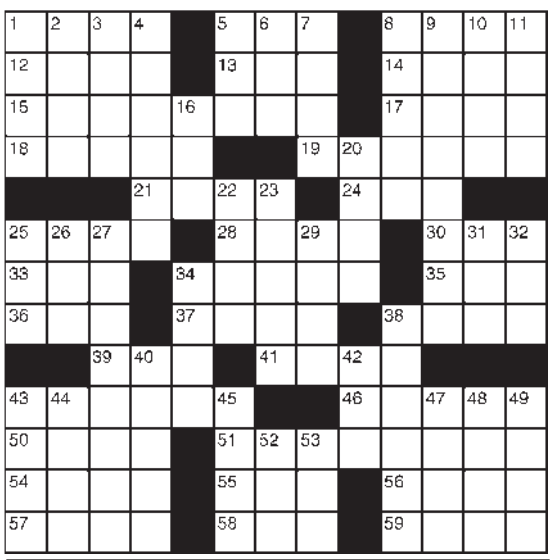
ACROSS
1 Fringe benefit
5 "Humbug!"
8 Rocky outcrop
12 Jai —
13 Swelled head
14 Valentine border
15 Cooking area
17 Gray's subj.
18 Wedding setting
19 Riyadh residents
21 Pride parade letters
24 GI entertainers
25 Ganges wrap
28 Incursion
30 "Tasty!"
33 Actress Thurman
34 Orchestral strings
35 Director Ang
36 Prohibit
37 Gas co., for one
38 Printer's blue
39 Corn core
41 Cruising
43 Drag
46 New York's — Island
50 Pundit's piece
51 Causing annoyance
54 Stallion's mate
55 Flightless bird
56 Revise
57 Org.
58 Trench
59 Pixels

DOWN
1 Brazilian rubber
2 Mideast airline
3 Harangue
4 Capital of Rwanda
5 Wager
6 Past
7 Beer ingredient
8 Santa —
9 Not by design
10 "Superfood" berry
11 Understands
16 Work unit
20 German car name
22 Author Harte
23 Shire of "Rocky"
25 Long lunch?
26 Docs' org.
27 Cattle farm workers
29 Misfortunes
31 — culpa
32 Gents
34 Rubik's brainteaser
38 Phoned
40 From days of yore
42 "A mouse!"
43 "Brave New World" drug
44 IRS employees
45 Get ready, briefly
47 Chic beach resort
48 Monogram pt.
49 Pvt.'s superiors
52 Parisian pal
53 Fanatic

Solution time: 23 mins.

D	I	O	N	■	B	R	R	■	S	C	A	R
A	R	E	A	■	L	I	E	■	H	C	N	E
M	A	U	P	H	C	P	S	■	H	A	I	E
■	■	■	L	O	W	■	T	A	■	L	E	D
F	A	K	E	D	■	T	R	I	M	■	■	■
I	M	P	S	■	M	E	A	L	P	L	A	N
B	I	O	■	M	A	X	I	S	■	C	T	O
M	S	P	A	C	M	A	N	■	M	C	A	T
■	■	■	R	I	M	S	■	S	A	N	D	S
A	C	A	C	I	A	■	T	R	■	■	■	■
B	E	L	A	■	M	E	R	I	■	P	A	Y
U	D	O	N	■	I	C	E	■	A	C	L	U
T	E	T	F	■	A	O	K	■	■	T	F	M

Yesterday's answer 7-27



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Taylor Schilling, 38; Jonathan Rhys Meyers, 45; Cassandra Clare, 49; Maya Rudolph, 50.

Happy Birthday: Assess your life; understanding what stresses you out will help resolve matters that can influence your health and your relationships with others. Clear up what isn't working for you by replacing negative situations with positive input. Select your associates carefully, and nurture the relationships that offer a lifeline. Change what's necessary to achieve peace of mind. Your numbers are 4, 15, 23, 27, 35, 42, 46.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Know what you must do to overcome adversity and make amends. Stand behind your statements, but don't ignore outside input. Networking will help you decide between who is most likely to help you get ahead and who is manipulative. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Set boundaries, but don't limit what you can achieve. Anger and instability will settle in if you aren't smart about handling others. Choose your battles wisely and partner with those who can contribute to your goal.✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* You'll be your own worst enemy if you don't stick to the truth and honor your promises. Diligence and discipline will help you advance; bold statements based on little substance will work against you. Use your imagination to create, not to mislead. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Use creative input to your advantage. Take what others offer and turn it into something spectacular. Your insight will draw attention and encourage others to look up to you and help you reach your target. Trust and believe in yourself.✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Conflict will make you think and spark new beginnings. Don't waste your time on anger. If you use your energy to accomplish your goals, you will find the quickest route to achieving happiness. Be rational and strive to ease stress. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Be part of the solution and make a difference. A change you make will bring positive results. Sharing with someone you love will bring you closer and help you make financial adjustments that lower your overhead. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* You'll overreact if given the chance. Think matters through, and don't act on assumptions. Look inward and concentrate on self-improvement. Discipline, coupled with fitness and sufficient rest, will be a game changer. Do whatever it takes to maintain good health. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Actions will speak louder than words. Live up to your promises and set high standards for others to follow. Don't let anger set in when taking a stellar approach to the way you do things will be worth a thousand words. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Be smart with your cash. Pay attention to detail and set practical goals. Turn your attention to home and family and ways to improve relationships and living arrangements. Take responsibility for your actions and words. Don't give up on love. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Plan the changes you want to enforce. Live within your means, and refuse to let anyone talk you into something that makes you feel uncomfortable. Personal improvements will add to your popularity and encourage love and romance. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* When in doubt, sit tight and wait to see what happens. Take the high road, regardless of what others do, and you'll have no regrets. A job opportunity or financial gain looks promising. Don't give up on your dreams. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Engage in something that inspires and motivates you to head in a new direction. A change will boost your morale and help you move on from situations holding you back. Let go of the past and celebrate new beginnings with someone you love. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are temperamental, passionate and generous. You are bold and social.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		9	1			7	8
	4				5		
1				2			
3				1			
9	1	4		5	8	3	
7			8	3			9
8			4	7			6
4			5	6			1
	2	3			7	4	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 7/27

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

7	6	5	8	1	9	2	4	3
8	2	9	3	6	4	1	5	7
3	1	4	5	2	7	9	6	8
4	3	1	7	9	5	6	8	2
9	5	7	6	8	2	3	1	4
6	8	2	1	4	3	5	7	9
1	7	6	2	3	8	4	9	5
2	4	8	9	5	6	7	3	1
5	9	3	4	7	1	8	2	6

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

GLITTER, SPARKLE AND SHINE Solution: 9 letters

S	E	N	I	H	S	S	C	I	T	E	M	S	O	C
A	G	P	A	R	T	I	C	L	E	S	T	S	G	A
C	R	N	A	E	L	K	R	A	P	S	L	N	N	N
O	E	T	I	S	H	O	W	S	I	Y	I	I	I	V
L	S	S	S	R	U	B	Y	T	T	R	P	U	L	A
O	I	E	D	T	R	Y	R	I	T	Ⓦ	S	Q	B	S
R	R	G	Y	N	F	A	L	N	E	Ⓞ	T	E	S	E
D	I	L	H	C	O	A	E	B	F	Ⓛ	I	S	M	C
D	D	E	Y	T	N	M	R	L	P	Ⓖ	C	H	U	N
I	E	A	H	O	E	A	A	C	K	O	K	A	R	A
S	S	M	S	G	C	K	F	I	B	N	W	D	T	I
C	C	R	A	E	E	O	W	G	D	E	I	D	C	D
O	E	G	L	S	Y	L	E	V	I	L	A	R	E	A
P	N	E	F	R	E	M	M	I	H	S	O	D	P	R
E	T	N	E	C	S	E	R	O	U	L	F	G	S	S

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Artists, Arts, Beads, Bling, Bracelet, Canvas, Color, Cosmetics, Crafts, Diamonds, Disco, Dress, Earrings, Engagement Ring, Fancy, Flakes, Flashy, Fluorescent, Gems, Gleam, Glow, Gold, Iridescent, Light, Lip Stick, Lively, Particles, Personality, Powder, Radiance, Ruby, Sequins, Shimmer, Shine, Shows, Sparkle, Spectrum, Sprinkle, Stars

Yesterday's Answer: Castle

Treasuries 27, 29, 31 and 33 through 49 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

Guardians' Plesac throws ball out of Fenway, Bosox end skid

BOSTON (AP) — Cleveland pitcher Zach Plesac threw the ball completely out of Fenway Park as the grounds crew began to roll the tarp onto the field, and the Boston Red Sox ended a five-game losing streak by beating the Guardians 3-1 Monday night.

With a light rain falling, Yolmer Sánchez hit an RBI single in the third inning to put Boston ahead 1-0. Plate umpire and crew chief Dan Iassogna then called for the tarp and Plesac, who was walking toward the third-base dugout, fired the ball over the third-base roof and out of the ballpark.

There were dark skies over Fenway when Iassogna was shown the weather radar by a member of the grounds crew. The rain quickly picked up, and very shortly after the tarp was completely in place, the skies opened up for about 15 minutes, making the conditions awful for any possibility of playing.

AP

Cleveland Guardians starting pitcher Zach Plesac delivers during the first inning of a baseball game against the Boston Red Sox at Fenway Park, Monday, July 25, 2022, in Boston.

"Well, I mean, it wasn't even raining," Plesac said of his frustration. "It's kind of like they're anticipating it. I was ready to play until we couldn't play. I don't think we should stop the game if we're capable of playing at the moment."

"I was just frustrated we shut that down. I didn't know if we'd be able to play or not coming out of the break. Luckily, it only lasted like 40 minutes or so," he said.

The game was delayed 38 minutes and Plesac returned to pitch.

Alex Verdugo hit a tie-breaking double and Boston's bullpen worked 3 1/3 scoreless innings. The Red Sox are just 6-15 in July and remain only a half-game ahead of last-place Baltimore in the AL East.

"We do understand that we could be a seller, you could be a buyer," Verdugo said of the up-coming trade deadline. "It all depends. We know we have a good team, we have a good group of guys and we could go somewhere. We're hoping we can just stick with what we've got and maybe get a couple of additions and make a postseason push."

José Ramírez drove in Cleveland's run with an infield hit. It was the third straight loss for the Guardians.

Wearing their "city connect" yellow-and-powder blue uniforms, the Red Sox broke a 1-1 tie with two runs in the sixth, chasing Plesac (2-8).

Verdugo doubled off the Green Monster and Rob Refsnyder raced home when the ball bounced over left fielder Steven Kwan back toward the infield as he fell to the ground trying to play the carom. Christian Vázquez added a bloop RBI single off reliever Trevor Stephan.

John Schreiber (3-1) got Myles Straw to ground out with two runners on to end the sixth before pitching the seventh. Garrett Whitlock got six outs for his second save.

"We played good defense. I think that was the difference," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said a day after said his team was playing "awful."

Making his first start since July 15 because of the All-Star break, Plesac was charged with three runs in five-plus innings, allowing only three hits.

"It was kind of an odd night," Cleveland manager Terry Francona said of Plesac's start. "He didn't give up too many hits."

Boston starter Nick Pivetta gave up seven singles and one run over 5 2/3 innings.

Orioles 5, Rays 1

In Baltimore, the bullpen has been perhaps the biggest part of Baltimore's climb this season.

When manager Brandon Hyde lifted starter Austin Voth after three innings against Tampa Bay, those relievers went to work.

"Tonight, they were so good," Hyde said. "They put six zeros up. It's absolutely outstanding."

Ryan Mountcastle hit a tie-breaking, two-run single in a four-run fifth that sent the Orioles to a 5-1 victory over the Rays on Monday night. Voth and five Baltimore relievers kept Tampa Bay's offense from delivering the big hit. The Rays left 10 men on base, including six in the first three innings.

"Early on, we got some guys on base, and when you do that, you've got to find ways to make contact, get the ball to the outfield, score some runs," manager Kevin Cash said. "We did not, and then their bullpen kind of got on a run where there wasn't many opportunities after the first couple innings."

Brandon Lowe homered leading off the third for Tampa Bay, but Corey Kluber (6-6) allowed four earned runs in five innings. Nick Vespi (3-0) struck out four in 1 2/3 innings of relief to earn the win. Vespi was recalled from Triple-A Norfolk before the game.

Tigers 12, Padres 4

In Detroit, Eric Haase hit a grand slam off Sean Manaea, Jeimer Candelario homered twice and the Detroit Tigers routed the San Diego Padres 12-4 Monday night.

Miguel Cabrera hit his 506th career homer in the sixth inning and moved past Al Simmons for 13th on the career RBI list with 1,840.

"I'm tired," joked Cabrera, who hadn't homered since May 15. "It is the first time I've run around the bases in years."

Manaea (5-5) was pummeled for a career-worst nine runs in 3 1/3 innings, including five unearned runs in the third.

"They got something going, and instead of focusing on getting it stopped, I let it snowball," he said. "That's just a lack of focus."

Making things worse for the Padres, his replacement, promising young left-hander MacKenzie Gore, was pulled with an injury.

Gore, ranked among the game's top pitching prospects before debuting this season, got four outs despite an average fastball velocity 2 mph slower than normal. He left with a trainer during the fifth inning.

"We saw his (velocity) was down to 90, but it came back up to 92," Padres manager Bob Melvin said. "When we saw him flexing his fist — the move you make when your elbow is hurting — we did the proper thing and got him out of there."

Melvin said Gore will return to San Diego with the team Wednesday evening to be examined by Padres doctors.

The Tigers had lost 11 of 13, scoring five runs in the last three games.

Royals 7, Angels 0

In Kansas City, Mo., Zack Greinke is getting to the point in his career where it seems as though just about every start brings with it some kind of record, even those that the former Cy Young winner never anticipated seeing.

Like his name climbing the career strikeouts list.

Hardly known for his overpowering stuff, Greinke nevertheless moved into the top 20 on Monday night while combining with four Kansas City Royals relievers to hold the scuffling Los Angeles Angels to five hits in a 7-0 victory.

"It's crazy. I never really thought about any of this stuff, but it's been interesting stuff happening the last couple of starts," said the 38-year-old Greinke, who is nearing the end of his 19th big league season. "I've never really thought about it."

Greinke scattered three hits over five innings before giving the ball to Amir Garrett (2-1), who worked around a leadoff double in the sixth. Jose Cuas handled the seventh, Scott Barlow the eighth and Josh Staumont finished off the ninth.

All the support came after Greinke departed: Michael A. Taylor drove in three runs, Emmanuel Rivera drove in a run during a four-run seventh, and MJ Melendez capped the rout with a two-run homer in the eighth.

The Angels' Noah Syndergaard (5-8) went 5 2/3 innings, allowing one run on six hits and two walks with six strikeouts.

Athletics 7, Astros 5

In Oakland, Calif., Adam Oller sat at his locker a nervous wreck as he watched the stressful final few outs on a corner clubhouse TV, elbows on knees and knees bouncing into the air.

Lou Trivino eventually finished it, and Oller finally had his first major league win, more than four months in the making.

"I'm glad it's over," the 27-year-old said of the weight off his shoulders, the sheer relief, special game ball ready to be sent to mom.

Tony Kemp homered and hit a two-run double, Skye Bolt added a two-run shot, and the Oakland Athletics held off the red-hot Houston Astros 7-5 on Monday night then celebrated Oller afterward with a beer shower.

Oller (1-3) struck out four over five innings, allowing four runs — three earned — on four hits and earned the victory in his sixth start and fourth stint of the year with Oakland that included some relief appearances.

Mariners 4, Rangers 3

In Seattle, in the midst of their July surge back into playoff contention, it's become clear the Seattle Mariners have figured out how to succeed in one-run games.

On Monday night, it was a formula of good starting pitching, key baserunning and some more hot hitting from Ty France.

"It really ends up defining your season finding ways to win games like tonight," Seattle manager Scott Servais said.

France launched his 13th home run as part of a three-hit night, Cal Raleigh added an RBI single and the Mariners rebounded from a rough weekend with a 4-3 victory over the Texas Rangers.

Erik Swanson escaped a ninth-inning jam and Seattle won for the 15th time in 18 games, a stretch of success interrupted over the weekend when the Mariners were swept at home by AL West-leading Houston following a 14-game winning streak. But Texas was a welcome visitor as the Mariners won their sixth straight over the Rangers and improved to 9-2 against them this season.

Seattle also won its eighth straight game decided by one run and is 22-12 on the season. The last time the Mariners lost a one-run game was June 26 against the Los Angeles Angels.

"We play so many of them that when the time comes we don't fold into that pressure," France said.

France singled in his first two at-bats, but it was his solo shot to center field in the fifth inning off starter Glenn Otto that gave the Mariners a 3-1 lead. France has homered in three of his past five games, including Seattle's last one before the All-Star break when he went deep off Otto (4-7) in Texas.

Bills open camp seeking to shake sting of '13 Seconds' loss

PITTSFORD, N.Y. (AP)—Try as the Buffalo Bills might in seeking to start fresh on a new season, the sting of those infamous 13 seconds still lingers some six months later.

In opening training camp on Sunday before a sold-out crowd of about 6,000 fans serving as a loud and boisterous backdrop of the sky-high Super Bowl expectations revolving around the team, the Bills were unable to finish the day without reflecting back on how their previous season ended abruptly in January.

The disappointment of blowing a three-point lead in the final 13 seconds of regulation of an eventual 42-36 overtime loss to Kansas City in an AFC divisional playoff remains hard to shake.

Quarterback Josh Allen declared, "We've got a new mindset," before adding: "We're a team that's got to find a way."

Without mentioning the playoff loss specifically, coach Sean McDermott addressed a question about expectations by noting: "The experience that we went through last season should help us this season."

And safety Jordan Poyer shook his head in recalling how ticked off he became upon being asked about what happened in those final moments while appearing on former Chiefs receiver Tyreek Hill's podcast this spring.

AP

Buffalo Bills quarterback Josh Allen (17) warms up during practice at the NFL football team's training camp in Pittsford, N.Y., Sunday July 24, 2022.

"That stuff definitely motivates you in the offseason. But obviously, it's a new year," Poyer said. "You don't want to dread in the past, because then you can't look forward in the future."

For all the success the Bills have enjoyed in claiming two consecutive AFC East titles for the first time since a four-year run during their Jim Kelly-led heydays from 1988-91, the players have unfinished business to address no matter what the odds-makers suggest in pegging them as Super Bowl favorites at plus-650.

"I'm glad that the people like us. I appreciate that. But it doesn't mean anything," general manager Brandon Beane said. "The AFC is stacked. I mean, whoever makes it out of the AFC (will have) had a heck of a year this year just looking at that gauntlet. I'm not even worried about the other half of the league."

On paper, at least, the Bills have reason to be counted among the NFL's elite.

At 26 and entering his fifth season, Allen has established himself as one of the league's top quarterbacks. The NFL's top-ranked defense a year ago, meantime, upgraded a middling pass rush with the free-agent addition of Von Miller, the league's active leader in sacks, who is fresh off of winning his second career title with the Los Angeles Rams.

"Yeah, it's high expectations. It's been high expectations for a while," Miller said. "Expectations are a privilege. Pressure is a privilege. There's a lot of pressure here in Buffalo and we just want to continue to take it one day at a time and see where we can get."

POYER TALKS

Poyer expressed hope he and the Bills can reach a contract extension, with his new agent, Drew Rosenhaus, attending camp. The 31-year-old Poyer is entering the final season of his contract and skipped all of the team's voluntary spring practices before attending the team's two mandatory sessions last month.

"Drew is here today talking things out with Brandon and I know they're both working things out on each side," Poyer said. "I'm just really excited to be here with my teammates and to see the guys again and to start this journey and try to get better every single day."

Beane cited his policy of not discussing contract talks in declining to comment.

DOWN THE THRUWAY

The Bills are back on the road for camp for the first time since 2019 after COVID-19 limited the team to spend the past two years at its headquarters in Orchard Park, New York.

Much has changed since the Bills last made the 90-minute drive east on the New York State Thruway to the St. John Fisher campus in suburban Rochester, where they've held training camp since 2000. Aside from the Division III school going from calling itself a college to university, of the Bills 90-player roster only 26 have attended camp at Fisher.

Each of the 14 scheduled practices are sold out.

FANDEMONIUM

Allen was steps away from the interview tent when someone in the stands yelled out: "Josh Allen, you're my father!"

A smiling Miller couldn't get through his news conference without being interrupted by a nearby fan, chanting "Von Mil-ler!"

"The energy is just so great. It's hard trying to come over here and do this interview with you guys," Miller said. "You just want to shake hands and kiss babies and sign autographs and do all that stuff."

Bus bond: Jags open camp with police escort to high school

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP)—Doug Pederson opened his first training camp in Jacksonville with a police escort.

The first-year Jaguars coach and 91 players loaded onto a five-bus caravan for a 5-mile ride from TIAA Bank Field to a nearby high school for their first practice Monday. Despite the extra security, the quick trip provided an old-school feel for a new-school coach whose main goal is leading one of the NFL's bumbling franchises back to respectability.

"Ten minutes on a bus full of 50 guys, yeah, there's quite a bit of bonding," Pederson said.

Jacksonville landed at Episcopal School for camp because of a $120 million renovation to the team's practice fields. The 18-month project includes three new fields (one indoors) and a 125,000-square-foot sports performance center that will house meeting rooms, offices, a weight room, a locker room and more. It's projected to open next June.

In the meantime, the Jaguars will be somewhat displaced for practice. They worked mostly from their game field for organized team activities, but that option wasn't feasible given the daily workload associated with training camp.

So team officials scouted five local spots, including campuses at Jacksonville University and the University of North Florida, before settling on Episcopal because of its close proximity and the fact that it was wide open in June, July and August.

"When you abide by the (Collective Bargaining Agreement) and you have an 11-hour day, you have to factor in travel and all of that," Pederson said. "It takes up either practice time, meeting time, whatever you can do. You have to work out some of those kinks. … It's been kind of fun this summer to watch the progression of everything."

The Jaguars renovated two lacrosse/soccer fields to mimic NFL-quality playing surfaces, installed a bank of electrical outlets and delivered two portable goal posts that were actually constructed and welded together from the six taken down at the old practice fields. They rented equipment, buses and security, racking up a total bill that topped $1 million for 14 days of practice.

"We can get everything done over here," Pederson said. "The only thing we have to be careful of is the weather, but that's why we're in the mornings and hopefully the storms stay away in the morning time. We just don't have a ton of shelter (and) player safety is No. 1, and we just have to make it work. We have plenty of time."

Not as much as usual.

The Jaguars opened camp nearly a week after Las Vegas. The teams play Aug. 4 in the Hall of Fame game in Canton, Ohio.

Pederson expressed no concern about having a preseason game in 10 days. He's unlikely to play many starters and felt as if players got enough done in OTAs, so much so that he nixed one practice and released most veterans from a mandatory, three-day minicamp.

"We're not starting over. We're picking up where we left off," second-year quarterback Trevor Lawrence said. "Everything we're talking about, we're flying through because we've already installed it a couple times. Having that knowledge and everyone can just pick up quick when we install, that's nice. We can add new wrinkles faster because we've already done it."

Pederson's first camp practice lasted a little more than an hour, the latest player-friendly approach taken by the longtime NFL backup QB.

Jacksonville didn't place anyone on the physically unable to perform list and has several rehabbing veterans close to making full returns. Running back James Robinson (Achilles tendon) could be the last one to work his way back. Robinson, who has 1,837 yards on the ground and 15 touchdowns in two seasons, tore his Achilles tendon in late December. He worked on the side Monday and is expecting a full return in mid-August.

"It's a good sign. I've seen how hard he's worked to get himself back this spring and this summer," Pederson said. "He's done a great job of putting himself in the position to where we don't have to (rush him back) but still be cautious with him and make sure he's ready when he's ready."

3x3 tournament kicks off next month

The Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation will be hosting a series of 3x3 competitions next month at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium of the TSL Sports Complex.

Dubbed as the Three vs Three Hoop Fest Tournament, the event will have games in four divisions: men's and women's open and boys and girls U18. The women's open division will kick off the series on Aug. 12 and 13, while the boys and girls U18 games will be played on Aug. 19 and 20. Team in the men's open will close out the series with their matches slated for Aug. 26 and 27.

"After taking a brief break to give way to the Pacific Mini Games, the NMIBF is excited to bring back basketball games on the island via our 3x3 tournament. Last year, we squeezed in all our games in one weekend, but this year we're spreading the tournament for the whole month to accommodate more teams and highlight every division," NMIBF president James Lee.

The NMIBF head added that the federation is hosting the series in support of FIBA's 3x3 program. By hosting local 3x3 events, the NMI are qualified to send teams to FIBA official competitions.

Registration for next month's tournament is now open and teams are encouraged to sign in early as slots are limited. The men's and women's open divisions are accepting 12 teams each, while the U18 age group is open to 10 squads each in the boys and girls categories. Registration and waiver forms can be obtained by emailing nmibasketballfederation@gmail.com. Entry fee is only $50 per team.

An official meeting is set for Aug. 6, Saturday, from 8am to 11, with the venue to be announced later. Registration and waiver forms as well as entry fees are also due at the meeting. Other details about the tournament will be discussed at the meeting.

For more information, visit the NMIBF Facebook account at NMIBasketballFederation or its Instagram account at NMIBasketball. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation's Three vs Three Hoop Fest Tournament will kick off next month at a still undetermined venue.

SNEAKY

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victory and finished off strong in the third set to win, 25-20, 25-22, 15-10.

The second semifinals had Team Ahuh going up against Calm Your Tips. Team Ahuh played Calm Your Tips into a standstill in the first two sets with the former winning the first set and the latter taking the second set. Getting revenge from earlier in the tournament, Team Ahuh won in the third set to claim their spot in the championship game against Sneaky Dinks, 25-15, 22-25, 15-10.

In the consolation match to decide the third place team, Coke Butter Cheese faced off against Calm Your Tips. Calm Your Tips was able to take the victory in the first set. Using that win, they were able to defeat Coke Butter Cheese in consecutive sets, 25-19, 25-19.

The awards ceremony followed the finals to award the teams and players with placement trophies and individual trophies. Aside from the Top 3 teams, the sportsmanship award was given to Vollocity.

Tournament MVP went to William Arriola with the championship MVP going to Sui Yi.

The most kills went to Jerome Manzon (48 Kills) with most blocks won by Peyton Christian (6 blocks). Most services aces also went to Sui Yi (28 aces)

TVA would like to extend its special thanks to the sponsors listed below who made this event not only achievable, but successful: Division of Youth Services; Tinian Athletics Sports Association; Tinian Mayor's Office; Tinian Municipal Council; Tinian Legislative Delegation; and Department of Community and Cultural Affairs.

TASA president Jose Kiyoshi, meanwhile, sent kudos to TVA officials for organizing the Summer 2022 Tournament.

"The hard work, commitment, and teamwork of the Tinian Volleyball Association officers despite a few troubling situations was worth it in the end as it resulted in a successful and exciting volleyball tournament for the community to enjoy. For that, we'd like to recognize the TVA officers who pushed through to make the Summer '22 Tournament possible,"he said.

TVA is made up of chair Isa Reyes, vice chair Anissa Delacruz, advisor Jazmine Furton, secretary Clarize Rodriguez, and treasurer Joseph Santos. ***(PR)***

SWIMMING

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Islands Basketball Federation board members. I was so shocked that we are included in the incentive and our players were so happy to also be included in this. Personally, I do want to thank [Gov. Ralph DLG Torres] for this incentive."

He added that next in his wishlist is a national training center not only for national players of basketball but also other sports teams representing the CNMI in off-island tournaments.

For Catherine Attao-Toves, CNMI women's national basketball coach, she and her wards are grateful for the cash incentive doled out by the government during the Team NMI Celebration Dinner held earlier this month at Kensington Hotel Saipan.

"With the incentives being extended to the Micro Cup athletes, we were quite surprised. We were just grateful that we were invited to attend the banquet and be a part of Team NMI's celebration."

Attao-Toves added that the CNMI women's national basketball team is very excited with the efforts in developing sports facilities in the CNMI.

"As we prepared for the Micro Cup, we were challenged with a venue as many of our gyms were preparing for the Pacific Mini Games. We are very grateful for the opportunity to use the TSL Gym at REM Center. With the success that the fellow sports federations had at the Pacific Mini Games, the NMIBF Women's Program is committed to continue its growth and strive to be a medal contender for the 2023 Micronesia Games. Therefore, we look forward to the improvements of our facilities and raising the standard of competitive basketball within the CNMI."

The CNMI men's national basketball team won bronze and the women silver in the 2022 FIBA Micronesian Cup held in early June in Guam.

Aside from athletes in the 2022 FINA World Cup and 2022 FIBA Micronesian Cup, participants of the 2022 Oceania Athletics Championships in Mackay, Australia also were given monetary incentives by the Torres administration.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The CNMI National Swimming Team poses with the Northern Marianas Sports Association board and Gov. Ralph DLG Torres after receiving their monetary incentive during the Team NMI Celebration Dinner held earlier this month at Kensington Hotel Saipan.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The CNMI National Athletics Team to the 2022 Oceania Athletics Championships poses with the Northern Marianas Sports Association board and Gov. Ralph DLG Torres after receiving their monetary incentive during the Team NMI Celebration Dinner held earlier this month at Kensington Hotel Saipan.

SERIN

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like I am able to deal with being nervous a little better," she added.

Sikkel, meanwhile, won two of three games yesterday following her opening day loss to Chung. She first edged Randiann Atento, 6-4 3-6 7-5.

After losing to Amelie Terlaje, 2-6, 3-6, Sikkel bounced back with a 6-4 7-5victory over Angelina Blaz.

In the boys 16 and under, Min Soo "David" Kwon absorbed two setbacks before prevailing in his final match.

He first lost to Jonathon Jackson, 6-3, 6-2, and Arjan Sachdej, 6-1, 6-3, before breaking through with a 6-0 6-4 win over fellow CNMI netter Simon Tang.

Nason Wessel also was victorious in his lone match yesterday after beating Aki Matsuno, 6-0 6-4.

Cody Shimizu, meanwhile, lost to former CNMI netter Andy Cajigan, 0-6, 2-6.

In the girls 14 and under, Irin Chung got the better of Desirae Wolphagen, 6-0 6-1, while compatriot Wang Hoo defeated Lulu William, 6-4 6-3.

Wimbledon veteran La Hunn Lam continued with his rampage in Guam with a 6-2 6-3 win over compatriot Si Woo Lee in the boys 14 and under.

Seung Woo "Henry" Choi also took down Hilary Toves, 6-2 6-2, and June Yu tired out Daniel Dontrick, 6-1 5-0 (retired), in the same age group.

In the boys 12 and under, Jihun Park overcame a tough challenge from Camelo Chen to prevail, 5-7, 6-2, 12-10, while Jeong Woo "Ryan" Choi beat Jeren Devera, 6-2, 7-5.

The CNMI pair of Jeong Woo "Ryan" Choi and Jihun Park lost in their boys 12 and under doubles match against Camelo Chen and Jeren Devera, 3-6, 4-2.

Lina Tsukagoshi, for her part, advanced in the girls 12 and under after beating Rachel San Agustin, 4-6, 6-3, 10-6.

After an absence of two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a total of 19 junior netters from the Northern Marianas are seeing action in the 2022 North Pacific Regional Championships.

They are duking it out against 16 players from Guam, six players from the Federated States of Micronesia, and five players from Palau.

The CNMI team is coached by Northern Marianas Islands Tennis Association president Jeff Race.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	66	31	.680	_
Toronto	53	43	.552	12½
Tampa Bay	52	44	.542	13½
Boston	49	48	.505	17
Baltimore	48	48	.500	17½

Central Division

Minnesota	52	44	.542	_
Cleveland	48	47	.505	3½
Chicago	48	48	.500	4
Kansas City	39	57	.406	13
Detroit	39	58	.402	13½

West Division

Houston	64	33	.660	_
Seattle	52	45	.536	12
Texas	43	52	.453	20
Los Angeles	40	56	.417	23½
Oakland	36	63	.364	29

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

New York	59	37	.615	_
Atlanta	58	40	.592	2
Philadelphia	50	46	.521	9
Miami	45	51	.469	14
Washington	33	65	.337	27

Central Division

Milwaukee	53	44	.546	_
St. Louis	51	46	.526	2
Pittsburgh	40	57	.412	13
Chicago	39	57	.406	13½
Cincinnati	37	58	.389	15

West Division

Los Angeles	64	31	.674	_
San Diego	54	44	.551	11½
San Francisco	48	48	.500	16½
Colorado	44	53	.454	21
Arizona	43	53	.448	21½

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Guardians' Plesac throws ball out of Fenway, Bosox end skid

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Sneaky Dinks tops TAVA Summer '22 tourney

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Participating teams in Tinian Volleyball Association's Summer 2022 Tournament pose for a group photo after the competition at the Tinian Gymnasium in San Jose.

TINIAN—Sneaky Dinks won the Summer 2022 Tournament organized by Tinian Volleyball Association over the weekend.

Sneaky Dinks took on Team Ahuh in the finals with the latter able to strike first, boasting a 25-15 win in the first set.

However, Sneaky Dinks was able to take the second set and third set to establish a 2-1 lead going into the fourth set. Team Ahuh did not leave Sneaky Dinks any room for comfort as they took the fourth set, bringing the game to an exhilarating fifth set.

With the score at 13-9, setter Sui Yi dealt two crucial service aces that ended the fifth set and the championship with Sneaky Dinks winning, 15-25, 25-23, 25-17, 22-25, 15-9.

Both finalists had to endure tough three-setters to advance to the championship round.

The first semifinals started off with Sneaky Dinks facing off against Coke Butter Cheese. Coke Butter Cheese took the first set, but Sneaky Dinks was able to carry the momentum from a second set

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Serin Chung wins third straight in Guam

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Serin Chung is taking her game to the next level after remaining undefeated in Day 2 of the 2022 North Pacific Regional Championships at the Guam National Tennis Center in Dededo.

Chung

After beating compatriot Savita Sikkel last Monday, the Saipan International School student won both her matches in the girls 16 and under yesterday in quick fashion.

She opened the day with a 6-0 6-0 blasting of Angelina Blaz and then capped it with a similar 6-1, 6-1 domination of Randiann Atento.

"It is really nice to be back at NPRC after two years of not having this tournament. It's challenging but I'm having fun playing against players from other places," Chung told *Saipan Tribune* through social media.

The Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 veteran added that being part of the just concluded quadrennial event also helped with her game.

"It definitely helped. I feel

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Swimming, basketball appreciative of incentive

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Athletes who saw action outside of the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 but still got monetary incentives for representing the CNMI in recent competitions are appreciative of the gesture.

CNMI national swimming coach Richard Sikkel said he and his swimmers—Juhn Tenorio, Taiyo Akimaru, Jinie Thompson, and Maria Batallones—that suited up in the 2022 FINA World Championship are happy with the cash reward.

"It is very encouraging to see this level of financial support for all sports from NMSA and the CNMI government. The recent improvements in infrastructure are also promising for the future of and the level of sports played in the CNMI. I know the swimmers and coaches were not expecting any financial incentives, that's not what drives us, but it is very much appreciated," he said.

CNMI national men's basketball coach Joe Diaz said while he and his players weren't expecting any monetary incentives, they're happy to have been included in the windfall just the same.

"First I really want to thank our Northern Mariana

See SWIMMING on Page 19

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The CNMI national men's and women's basketball teams pose with the Northern Marianas Sports Association board and Gov. Ralph DLG Torres after receiving their monetary incentive during the Team NMI Celebration Dinner held earlier this month at Kensington Hotel Saipan.